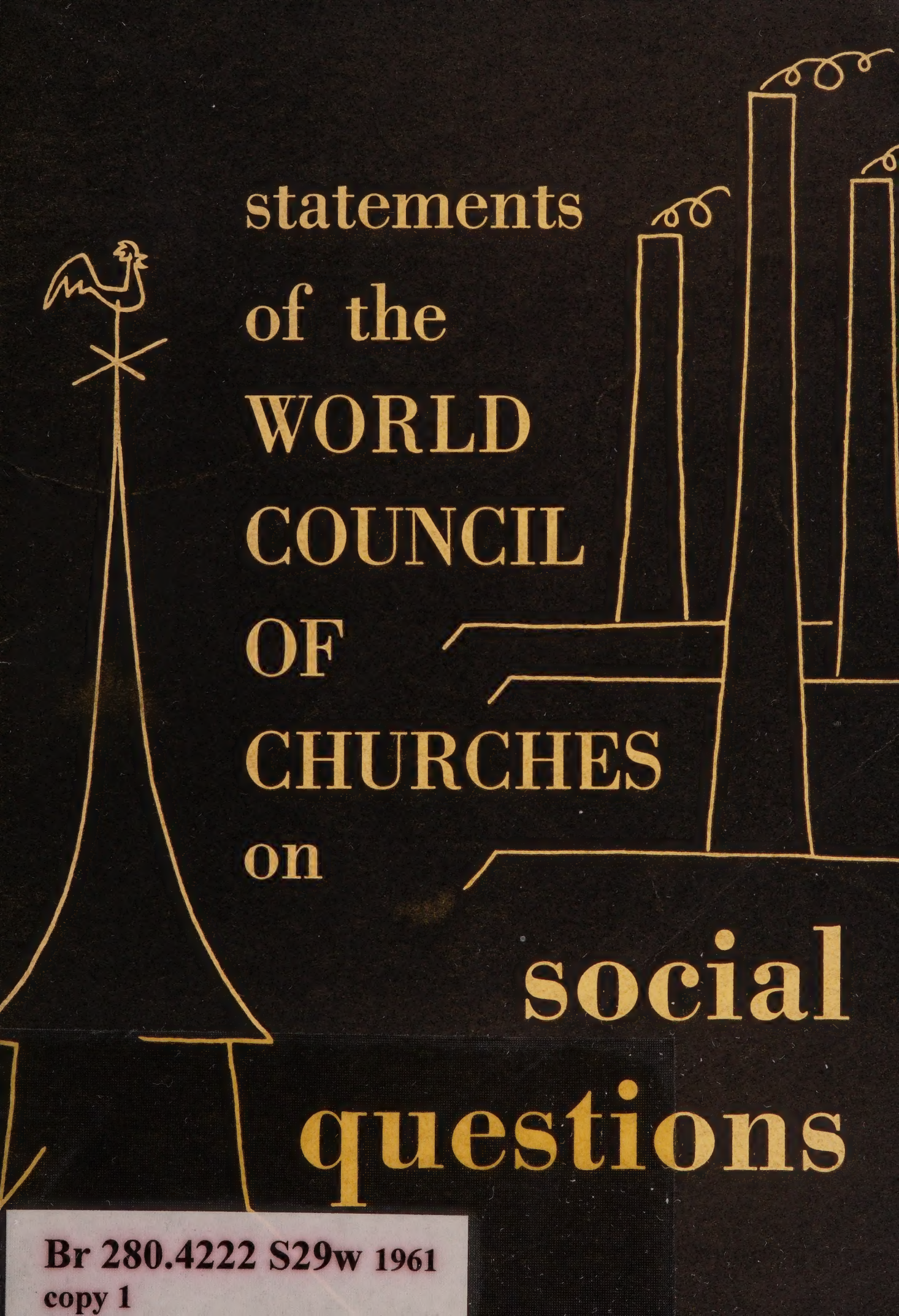

statements of the WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES on social questions

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STATEMENTS

of the

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

on

SOCIAL QUESTIONS

With a Preface
on the
Development of Ecumenical Social Thinking

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PREFACE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECUMENICAL SOCIAL THINKING

One of the major forces which have drawn and held the churches together in the ecumenical movement has been the necessity to unite their thought and action on the vast political, economic and social problems of the modern world. A very large part of the energy of the movement has in turn been directed toward seeking a common Christian way of meeting the challenge of human social disorder.

A huge body of material — studies, essays, reports, surveys — testifies to the diligence with which the churches have addressed themselves to this task. In this booklet are presented the major documents on social questions produced by the World Council of Churches from its formation in 1948 to the Second Assembly in Evanston, Illinois (USA), in 1954.

This collection is published by the Department on Church and Society (Division of Studies) of the World Council of Churches in order that pastors and laymen around the world may have ready access to the chief documents. It includes only such documents as have some kind of official standing, that is, such as have been adopted or received by officially constituted ecumenical gatherings. The kind of action which was taken, and the group by which it was taken, are indicated in the prefatory note to each document.

The reader who is new to the ecumenical discussion of the Christian responsibility for society may find it difficult to understand the meaning of much that is said in these reports, partly because the thinking is so condensed, partly because they have been written against a background of preparatory documents which do not appear in the official reports. For this reason, and to provide the newcomer to ecumenical discussion on social questions with a framework within which to view these statements, we give the following brief survey of the development of ecumenical social thinking.

The First Ecumenical Conference on Social Problems: Stockholm (1925)

International cooperation among Christians in the field of social action began in the years before the First World War. This cooperation was stimulated by the development of Christian social movements in many

countries and by the need for common Christian witness in the face of social problems which had become world-wide.

The First World War, while interrupting the progress of this cooperation, also acted as a powerful stimulant. Many in the churches believed that the war had been a great judgment on Christians for their indifference to the social situation. Immediately after the war, therefore, there was a movement to bring together the Christian leaders of the world to secure united practical action on the problems of industrial, political, social and international life. This culminated in the Universal Christian Conference on Life and Work held at Stockholm in 1925, the first representative ecumenical conference on social questions. This Stockholm meeting was attended by 600 delegates from 37 countries and its leading spirit, and in many respects, the pioneer of ecumenical social thinking was Nathan Söderblom, Archbishop of Uppsala.

Stockholm is remembered today not so much for what it said as because it marks the beginning of modern ecumenical social thought. If it seems to us to have contributed relatively few ideas that have endured, we must remember that in their first meeting together the churches were starting absolutely "from scratch" — there was no common body of social thought, no common experience in dealing with these issues, not even any common agreement as to which issues were of primary importance. There was only a common concern about the urgency of the world's need for social reconstruction, especially in the face of the disasters of the World War and the years following it, and a common conviction that Christians and the Christian churches were called to play a part in that reconstruction. "The world is too strong for a divided Church." These prophetic words are perhaps the most significant contribution of the Stockholm meeting.

Nevertheless, the meeting focussed attention on the issues which the churches were to continue to find central in their thinking in the years ahead : the issues of economic order, property, labour relations, social morality and international justice and peace. Furthermore, this conference awakened a new and profound interest in the Christian task in society and aroused the churches to begin thinking together about their common responsibilities.

The Development of Christian Social Thinking after Stockholm

A Continuation Committee was appointed at Stockholm to carry forward the work which was begun there, and in 1930 this committee was reconstituted as a permanent body, the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. This body promoted research and study conferences on

a wide range of social problems until 1938, when it transferred its responsibilities and functions to the new Provisional Committee of the World Council of Churches in Process of Formation.

One of the main tasks of ecumenical social thinking following Stockholm was to develop the theological foundations for social action. It was clearly not enough to say that "service unites" ; and there was increasing recognition that social questions could not be discussed without reference to theological principles. The reintegration of the theological, the economic and the sociological realms of thought and experience was one of the primary tasks facing those responsible for ecumenical study in these years. The problems involved in achieving this reintegration cannot, for lack of space, be dealt with here, but they are well described in various chapters of the *History of the Ecumenical Movement* (edited by Rouse and Neill, and published by the SPCK, London, 1954). It is significant that by 1937 a great body of literature dealing with the problem of the theological foundations for social ethics had appeared ; it radically affected the direction of social thinking, and also provided the inspiration for a new world conference on social questions in 1937.

The Oxford Conference of 1937

The Conference on Church, Community and State which met in Oxford in 1937 was strikingly different from the Stockholm conference. It was more carefully prepared and showed the results of twelve years of experience with ecumenical study on social problems. Moreover, the members of this conference faced a radically different situation from that of 1925. The hope for everlasting peace had given way to the threat of a new world war ; industrial unemployment and social disorder were serious problems in nearly every country, and the menace of the totalitarian state had risen in new and virulent forms.

The Oxford conference of 1937 remains today a landmark in ecumenical social thinking. The layman or pastor who wants to understand the roots of modern ecumenical social thinking must eventually go back to the documents of Oxford for guidance. The report on *Church, Community and State in Relation to the Economic Order* was the clearest expression of the Christian responsibility in economic life which had been formulated up to that time, and it remains, despite its specific context, the foundation for much that has been said by the World Council on this subject in later years. Among the important issues dealt with are : the delineation of the principles of justice and its relation to the love commandment of the Gospel ; the recognition of the problems of western economic systems which had given rise to various proposals for, and movements toward, reform in the years during the great depression ; and the outlining of the fundamental rights and responsibilities

of the Church in relation to the political and economic order. One of the significant contributions of Oxford was its emphasis upon the need for change in economic and social structures. This was a great improvement on the individualistic views characteristic of much previous thinking about social questions.

It may indeed be concluded that Oxford, more than any other one event in the history of the ecumenical movement, set the compass for the course which the churches were to follow in their work in this field. A study conference of such proportions and significance has not been held since, and the fundamental approach to the study and discussion of social questions in an ecumenical setting which was developed there has remained characteristic of much that has followed.

The First Assembly of the World Council of Churches (1948)

The Second World War intervened between the Oxford Conference and the First Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam in 1948. However, during the years when circumstances had erected so many barriers between them, the churches had come to feel perhaps more strongly than before their need for fellowship and common witness. The work of the World Council of Churches in process of formation involved a great deal of study and thought on social questions. A new set of tensions and new conflicts of political, social and economic forces were straining world peace and justice. The Amsterdam report on *The Church and the Disorder of Society* (the statement with which this booklet begins) deals with these new tensions. For the first time the problem of the Christian attitude towards communism comes up for careful discussion. There is also a thorough consideration of the Christian attitude toward the ideology of *laissez-faire* capitalism, and considerable attention is given to the dangers of depersonalization and dehumanization in modern industrial life.

Perhaps the greatest significance of the Amsterdam report, however, lies in its delineation of the concept of the Responsible Society, which may be regarded as a kind of summation of all the thinking on political and economic issues which had gone before. It has been the key concept in the discussion of these issues since 1948, both in ecumenical circles and among individual churches and thinkers. The report of the Amsterdam Assembly defines this key concept in just one sentence : "A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it."

The churches have found this concept of the Responsible Society useful in interpreting political, social and economic issues. It does not pretend

to define a Christian social system. Indeed, it explicitly refuses to do so. In its original context and in all subsequent development, the idea of the Responsible Society suggests a framework within which the churches attempt to make a fresh approach to the problems of political and economic organization, one which avoids both the terminology and the stereotyped ideas which so often characterize discussions of contemporary economic systems. It also avoids the difficult problems which arise when one attempts to discuss "democratic" political ideals on a world-wide basis. It is, therefore, an effort to suggest a structure of interpretation within which the churches can discuss these issues without identifying themselves with existing political or economic systems.

The real meaning and application of the term becomes more clear in a subsequent section of the Amsterdam report which suggests that "for a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticize and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. It is required that economic justice and provision of equality of opportunity be established for all the members of society." Furthermore, as used by the churches, "responsible society" includes the fundamental point that men individually and in their social groups exist in a relation of responsibility to God, so that the final judgment on any social system can never be made by reference simply to those historical elements which compose it, but must always extend to its ultimate relationship to God. This principle prevents the absolutizing, not only of any social system, but of any particular social policies, and recognizes that the final word is said by no historical power but by that Power which rules history. But while limiting the scope of human social activity, it affirms that such activity within the limits laid upon it is a duty coming from God. Men are responsible for each other and to each other and to God.

The Amsterdam statement also focussed attention on the influence of technics on modern life and the need to counter the influence of technical progress in subordinating persons to purely technical considerations. These two concerns, the Responsible Society and the Meaning of Work in modern industrial society, became the focal points for study in the ecumenical movement in the years between the Amsterdam and Evanston Assemblies.

Developments Until Evanston (1954)

The Amsterdam report received careful attention in the churches and undoubtedly had a great influence on Christian social thought during the next five years. It was the first official pronouncement on social questions by the new *World Council of Churches* which had itself come into being at

Amsterdam. For the first time, the *Churches* had spoken as a *Council* about their responsibilities in the realm of social problems. And with the establishment of the World Council ecumenical study on social problems became a permanent enterprise undertaken *by* the churches and *for* the churches. Accordingly, study groups and committees were formed in the churches in many countries and concentrated on the twin topics of the Responsible Society and the Meaning of Work.

There are relatively few official reports on the Responsible Society theme between 1948 and the Assembly in 1954, partly because the main emphasis in this period was on stimulating study at the national and local level. Groups were formed to develop the idea of the Responsible Society in relation to many new problems of political and economic life, including the rise of the so-called welfare state, the witness of the Church in communist countries, and the problems of European economic and political ntegration. There is an extensive ecumenical literature on all these subjects which can be obtained from the World Council of Churches.

In a few years, the study programme on the Meaning of Work developed to such proportions and was related to so many aspects of World Council work, that responsibility for its further implementation was divided between the Ecumenical Institute, the Secretariat for Laity (now the Department on the Laity) and the Study Department (now the Division of Studies).

The reports which appear after 1948 show the growing concern of the World Council with a new problem : the social situation confronting the churches in Asia. Two ecumenical study conferences contributed reports on the Responsible Society in Asia. These reports are important because they concentrated the attention of the churches on the situation of peoples outside the industrialized western countries and so brought a new dimension into ecumenical social thinking. Thus the establishment of the World Council of Churches helped the ecumenical movement "to become genuinely the expression of the concern of a world-wide Church." This development has also given meaning to the new patterns of cooperation between the World Council and the missionary movement as represented in the International Missionary Council.

It should be pointed out here that in a remarkable way the findings of the conferences of the International Misisonary Council, especially Jerusalem (1928) and Madras (1938), paralleled, complemented and reinforced the ecumenical work on social questions of the Life and Work movement in the churches in the west. The close correlation of viewpoints between the reports of Stockholm and Oxford on the one side, and Jerusalem and Madras on the other, helped to provide a basis for the increasingly close association which has developed since 1948 between the International Missionary Council and the World Council of Churches, not only in organizational structure but also in spirit.

By 1952 the preparation for the Evanston Assembly discussion on social questions had begun and three points were receiving primary attention: the witness of the churches in communist societies, the role of the state in economic life, and the responsibility of churches in and for the new societies of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The title of the preparatory studies was "The Responsible Society in a World Perspective". To prepare the delegates for the discussion of social questions at Evanston, a survey of Christian thinking on social questions around the world was compiled, and readers are referred to this survey (obtainable from the World Council) for more detailed information on the social issues which were considered by the delegates of the churches gathered at Evanston.

The Evanston Contribution

The discussion of social questions at Evanston was influenced by many factors, not least the important studies on the main theme of the Assembly, "Christ, the Hope of the World". It was feared by some that the emphasis on hope would lead to such a preoccupation with the final judgment and the "end of history" as to undermine concern for our responsibility as Christians within history. But these fears were unwarranted, and the main theme discussions had quite the opposite effect. They showed that there is an essential relationship between Christian hope for the "end of history" and the Christian hope within history. It was generally agreed that the hope in the coming of God's Kingdom frees the Christian for courageous and realistic action in the world.

On the subject of the Responsible Society, the Evanston Assembly reaffirmed the views of Amsterdam, but it went far beyond the 1948 statement in trying to relate this idea to concrete social problems. At this point Evanston gave new direction to ecumenical social thinking, especially on the question of the churches and economic life. Whereas previous ecumenical pronouncements had concentrated on the problems of *laissez-faire* capitalism, the Evanston statement warns "against the danger that the union of political and economic power may result in an all-controlling state", and recognizes "the importance of relative freedom in enterprise and... the regulating role of the price system". However, it is made clear that such statements should not be read in the context of the old "left-right" controversy in economic and political thought. Today, it said, "...disputes about 'capitalism' and 'socialism' disguise the more important issues in the field of economic and social policy... It is not the case that we have merely to choose between the easily distinguishable types of economic organizations... In all types of economy there is to be found a variety of forms; there is no one pattern that is universally valid."

One of the notable contributions of Evanston was to place the social problems of the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America squarely

before the churches. The interest aroused in this subject has since led to a new ecumenical study project on the theme, "The Common Christian Responsibility Toward Areas of Rapid Social Change". This project is being undertaken by the Department on Church and Society, which was created at Evanston within the newly-organized Division of Studies.

The Situation Today

What is the content of ecumenical social thinking today? In this brief survey of the basis and scope of World Council pronouncements in this field, it has not been possible to describe in detail the views of the churches, nor is it the function of this introductory statement to evaluate and summarize the significance of these pronouncements. But as the reader studies the reports contained in this booklet, he will be able to draw some conclusions of his own on their meaning for the witness of the Church and the individual Christian in society.

It may be sufficient to close by pointing out that in all these reports the Church's task in society has been consistently seen as having two foci: the elaboration of the over-all ends and purposes of social institutions, and the investigation and discussion of the responsibility of the Church and of the individual Christian in specific situations. The trend over the years has perhaps been to put the greater emphasis on the second of these tasks, because it is recognized that the more "theoretical" work cannot be fruitful unless it is firmly founded on facts and on a pragmatic approach to them. Thus the churches have increasingly emphasized the importance of careful and systematic study of various social problems, and through the ecumenical movement have devoted much of their energy to this job. They have also placed increasing emphasis on the important role of the layman, who from his activity in political and economic affairs, speaks to the Church and helps the Church to understand the issues, so that all Christians might better understand their vocation as representatives of the Church in the world.

Finally, these pronouncements contain the conviction that the first responsibility of the Church in society is its own life, both as regards the lives of its members as participants in society and as regards its corporate life as one of the institutions of society.

Thus the Church has repeatedly called its members to repentance for, and reform of, those practices which have involved them in the sins of society. It calls them to engage on their own in bold and pioneering ventures which will suggest to society as a whole new possibilities for community life.

NOTE TO THE SECOND EDITION

This second edition of *Statements of the World Council of Churches on Social Questions* has been made necessary by the great demand for this collection. Since the first edition was published the World Council's Division of Studies has convened a conference on "The Responsible Society in National and International Affairs", at Arnoldshain, Germany (July 9-14, 1956), and a report from this meeting on the subject of *Social and Economic Affairs* is included in this edition.

The reader's attention is also called to the two official statements on "The Common Christian Responsibility Toward Areas of Rapid Social Change" and to many documents and reports resulting from the special World Council enquiry on this topic. It is already apparent that this study will be of great significance to ecumenical thinking on social questions but the length of these documents makes it impossible to include them here. Moreover this material provides the basis of a study programme rather than a definitive World Council statement of findings on this subject, which will be forthcoming at a later stage.

FOR FURTHER READING

on

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECUMENICAL SOCIAL THINKING

1. *A History of the Ecumenical Movement, 1517—1948.* Ed. by Ruth Rouse and Stephen Neill, SPCK London, 1954, 822 pp. 32s6d.

2. *Ecumenical Survey on Social Questions.* Published in the USA in the volume *The Christian Hope and the Task of the Church*, Harper & Bros., New York, 1954, $5. Published as an individual booklet by SCM Press, London. Available also in German and French editions.

3. *Ecumenical Documents on Church and Society, 1925—1954.* Contains the Stockholm and Oxford Conference reports and other pre-Amsterdam material. Available from the World Council, Geneva.

4. *Interpretations of the Christian Responsibility in Society.* A Selection of six addresses on social questions delivered at the Evanston Assembly (mineographed, 40 pp.). Available from the World Council, Geneva.

5. *The Common Christian Responsibility Toward Areas of Rapid Social Change (1955).* A brief document prepared by the Department on Church and Society describing the new ecumenical study on this topic. 6 pp.

6. *Second Statement on the Issues in the Study of Rapid Social Change.* 1956 (42 pages). Available from the World Council, Geneva. Sw. fr. 1.—, 1/6s. U.K. or 35c. U.S.A.

I. AMSTERDAM (1948)

Prefatory Note :

When the First Assembly met in Amsterdam in the late summer of 1948, its work was divided into four sections under the overall theme, "Man's Disorder and God's Design". One of these sections dealt with social questions, under the theme, "The Church and the Disorder of Society". Preparatory material for this section had been submitted in the form of a volume to which such men as Emil Brunner, Jacques Ellul, Reinhold Niebuhr, and J. H. Oldham contributed. The Report of the section, which is printed here, was received unanimously by the Assembly as a whole and commended to the churches for their serious consideration and appropriate action.

It ought to be noted that the concept of "The Responsible Society", which has played such an important part in recent and current ecumenical thinking on social questions, is formulated here for the first time in an ecumenical document.

The Report of Section III is here prefaced with an excerpt from the Message of the Assembly.

THE MESSAGE OF THE FIRST ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES — AMSTERDAM, 22 AUGUST - 4 SEPTEMBER 1948

(excerpt)

Our coming together to form a World Council will be vain unless Christians and Christian congregations everywhere commit themselves to the Lord of the Church in a new effort to seek together, where they live, to be His witnesses and servants among their neighbours. We have to remind ourselves and all men that God has put down the mighty from their seats and exalted the humble and meek. We have to learn afresh together to speak boldly in Christ's name both to those in power and to the people, to oppose terror, cruelty and race discrimination, to stand by the outcast, the prisoner and the refugee. We have to make of the Church in every place a voice for those who have no voice, and a home where every man will be at home. We have to learn afresh together what is the duty of the Christian man or woman in industry, in agriculture, in politics, in the professions and in the home. We have to ask God to

teach us together to say "No" and to say "Yes" in truth. "No", to all that flouts the love of Christ, to every system, every programme and every person that treats any man as though he were an irresponsible thing or a means of profit, to the defenders of injustice in the name of order, to those who sow the seeds of war or urge war as inevitable; "Yes", to all that conforms to the love of Christ, to all who seek for justice, to the peacemakers, to all who hope, fight and suffer for the cause of man, to all who — even without knowing it — look for new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

REPORT OF SECTION III, THE CHURCH AND THE DISORDER OF SOCIETY

I. The Disorder of Society

The world today is experiencing a social crisis of unparalleled proportions. The deepest root of that disorder is the refusal of men to see and admit that their responsibility to God stands over and above their loyalty to any earthly community and their obedience to any worldly power. Our modern society, in which religious tradition and family life have been weakened, and which is for the most part secular in its outlook underestimates both the depth of evil in human nature and the full height of freedom and dignity in the children of God.

The Christian Church approaches the disorder of our society with faith in the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In Him God has established His Kingdom and its gates stand open for all who will enter. Their lives belong to God with a certainty that no disorder of society can destroy, and on them is laid the duty to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness.

In the light of that Kingdom, with its judgment and mercy, Christians are conscious of the sins which corrupt human communities and institutions in every age, but they are also assured of the final victory over all sin and death through Christ. It is He who has bidden us pray that God's Kingdom may come and that His will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; and our obedience to that command requires that we seek in every age to overcome the specific disorders which aggravate the perennial evil in human society, and that we search out the means of securing their elimination or control.

Men are often disillusioned by finding that changes of particular systems do not bring unqualified good, but fresh evils. New temptations to greed and power arise even in systems more just than those they have replaced because sin is ever present in the human heart. Many, therefore,

lapse into apathy, irresponsibility and despair. The Christian faith leaves no room for such despair, being based on the fact that the Kingdom of God is firmly established in Christ and will come by God's act despite all human failure.

Two chief factors contribute to the crisis of our age. One of these is the vast concentrations of power — which are under capitalism mainly economic and under Communism both economic and political. In such conditions, social evil is manifest on the largest scale not only in the greed, pride and cruelty of persons and groups; but also in the momentum or inertia of huge organisations of men, which diminish their ability to act as moral and accountable beings. To find ways of realising personal responsibility for collective action in the large aggregations of power in modern society is a task which has not yet been undertaken seriously.

The second factor is that society, as a whole dominated as it is by technics, is likewise more controlled by a momentum of its own than in previous periods. While it enables men the better to use nature, it has the possibilities of destruction, both through war and through the undermining of the natural foundations of society in family, neighbourhood and craft. It has collected men into great industrial cities and has deprived many societies of those forms of association in which men can grow most fully as persons. It has accentuated the tendency in men to waste God's gift to them in the soil and in other natural resources.

On the other hand, technical developments have relieved men and women of much drudgery and poverty, and are still capable of doing more. There is a limit to what they can do in this direction. Large parts of the world, however, are far from that limit. Justice demands that the inhabitants of Asia and Africa, for instance, should have benefits of more machine production. They may learn to avoid the mechanisation of life and the other dangers of an unbalanced economy which impair the social health of the older industrial peoples. Technical progress also provides channels of communication and interdependence which can be aids to fellowship, though closer contact may also produce friction.

There is no inescapable necessity for society to succumb to undirected developments of technology, and the Christian Church has an urgent responsibility to-day to help men to achieve fuller personal life within the technical society.

In doing so, the churches should not forget to what extent they themselves have contributed to the very evils which they are tempted to blame wholly on the secularisation of society. While they have raised up many Christians who have taken the lead in movements of reform, and while many of them have come to see in a fresh way the relevance of their faith to the problems of society, and the imperative obligations thus laid upon

them, they share responsibility for the contemporary disorder. Our churches have often given religious sanction to the special privileges of dominant classes, races and political groups, and so they have been obstacles to changes necessary in the interests of social justice and political freedom. They have often concentrated on a purely spiritual or otherworldly or individualistic interpretation of their message and their responsibility. They have often failed to understand the forces which have shaped society around them, and so they have been unprepared to deal creatively with new problems as they have arisen in technical civilisation ; they have often neglected the effects of industrialisation on agricultural communities.

II. Economic and Political Organisation

In the industrial revolution economic activity was freed from previous social controls and outgrew its modest place in human life. It created the vast network of financial, commercial and industrial relations which we know as the capitalist order. In all parts of the world new controls have in various degrees been put upon the free play of economic forces, but there are economic necessities which no political system can afford to defy. In our days, for instance, the need for stability in the value of money, for creation of capital and for incentives in production, is inescapable and world-wide. Justice, however, demands that economic activities be subordinated to social ends. It is intolerable that vast millions of people be exposed to insecurity, hunger and frustration by periodic inflation or depression.

The Church cannot resolve the debate between those who feel that the primary solution is to socialise the means of production, and those who fear that such a course will merely lead to new and inordinate combinations of political and economic power, culminating finally in an omnicompetent State. In the light of the Christian understanding of man we must, however, say to the advocates of socialisation that the institution of property is not the root of the corruption of human nature. We must equally say to the defenders of existing property relations that ownership is not an unconditional right ; it must, therefore, be preserved, curtailed or distributed in accordance with the requirements of justice.

On the one hand, we must vindicate the supremacy of persons over purely technical considerations by subordinating all economic processes and cherished rights to the needs of the community as a whole. On the other hand, we must preserve the possibility of a satisfying life for "little men in big societies". We must prevent abuse of authority and keep open as wide a sphere as possible in which men can have direct and responsible relations with each other as persons.

Coherent and purposeful ordering of society has now become a major necessity. Here governments have responsibilities which they must not shirk. But centres of initiative in economic life must be so encouraged as to avoid placing too great a burden upon centralised judgment and decision. To achieve religious, cultural, economic, social and other ends it is of vital importance that society should have a rich variety of smaller forms of community, in local government, within industrial organisations, including trade unions, through the development of public corporations and through voluntary associations. By such means it is possible to prevent an undue centralisation of power in modern technically organised communities, and thus escape the perils of tyranny while avoiding the dangers of anarchy.

III. The Responsible Society

Man is created and called to be a free being, responsible to God and his neighbour. Any tendencies in State and society depriving man of the possibility of acting responsibly are a denial of God's intention for man and His work of salvation. A responsible society is one where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order, and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and the people whose welfare is affected by it.

Men must never be made a mere means for political or economic ends. Man is not made for the State but the State for man. Man is not made for production, but production for man. For a society to be responsible under modern conditions it is required that the people have freedom to control, to criticise and to change their governments, that power be made responsible by law and tradition, and be distributed as widely as possible through the whole community. It is required that economic justice and provision of equality of opportunity be established for all the members of society.

We therefore condemn :

1. Any attempt to limit the freedom of the Church to witness to its Lord and His design for mankind and any attempt to impair the freedom of men to obey God and to act according to conscience, for those freedoms are implied in man's responsibility before God ;

2. Any denial to man of an opportunity to participate in the shaping of society, for this is a duty implied in man's responsibility towards his neighbour ;

3. Any attempt to prevent men from learning and spreading the truth.

IV. Communism and Capitalism

Christians should ask why Communism in its modern totalitarian form makes so strong an appeal to great masses of people in many parts of the world. They should recognise the hand of God in the revolt of multitudes against injustice that gives Communism much of its strength. They should seek to recapture for the Church the original Christian solidarity with the world's distressed people, not to curb their aspirations towards justice, but, on the contrary, to go beyond them and direct them towards the only road which does not lead to a blank wall, obedience to God's will and His justice. Christians should realise that for many, especially for many young men and women, Communism seems to stand for a vision of human equality and universal brotherhood for which they were prepared by Christian influences. Christians who are beneficiaries of capitalism should try to see the world as it appears to many who know themselves excluded from its privileges and who see in Communism a means of deliverance from poverty and insecurity. All should understand that the proclamation of racial equality by Communists and their support of the cause of colonial peoples makes a strong appeal to the populations of Asia and Africa and to racial minorities elsewhere. It is a great human tragedy that so much that is good in the motives and aspirations of many Communists and of those whose sympathies they win has been transformed into a force that engenders new forms of injustice and oppression, and that what is true in Communist criticism should be used to give convincing power to untrustworthy propaganda.

Christians should recognise with contrition that many churches are involved in the forms of economic injustice and racial discrimination which have created the conditions favourable to the growth of Communism, and that the atheism and the anti-religious teaching of Communism are in part a reaction to the chequered record of a professedly Christian society. It is one of the most fateful facts in modern history that often the working classes, including tenant farmers, came to believe that the churches were against them or indifferent to their plight. Christians should realise that the Church has often failed to offer to its youth the appeal that can evoke a disciplined, purposeful and sacrificial response, and that in this respect Communism has for many filled a moral and psychological vacuum.

The points of conflict between Christianity and the atheistic Marxian Communism of our day are as follows: (1) the Communist promise of what amounts to a complete redemption of man in history; (2) the belief that a particular class by virtue of its rôle as the bearer of a new order is free from the sins and ambiguities that Christians believe to be characteristic of all human existences; (3) the materialistic and deterministic teachings, however they may be qualified, that are incompatible with belief in God and with the Christian view of man as a person, made in God's image

and responsible to Him ; (4) the ruthless methods of Communists in dealing with their opponents ; (5) the demand of the party on its members for an exclusive and unqualified loyalty which belongs only to God, and the coercive policies of Communist dictatorship in controlling every aspect of life.

The Church should seek to resist the extension of any system that not only includes oppressive elements but fails to provide any means by which the victims of oppression may criticise or act to correct it. It is a part of the mission of the Church to raise its voice of protest wherever men are the victims of terror, wherever they are denied such fundamental human rights as the right to be secure against arbitrary arrest, and wherever governments use torture and cruel punishments to intimidate the consciences of men.

The Church should make clear that there are conflicts between Christianity and capitalism. The developments of capitalism vary from country to country and often the exploitation of the workers that was characteristic of early capitalism has been corrected in considerable measure by the influence of trade unions, social legislation and responsible management. But (1) capitalism tends to subordinate what should be the primary task of any economy — the meeting of human needs — to the economic advantages of those who have most power over its institutions. (2) It tends to produce serious inequalities. (3) It has developed a practical form of materialism in western nations in spite of their Christian background, for it has placed the greatest emphasis upon success in making money. (4) It has also kept the people of capitalist countries subject to a kind of fate which has taken the form of such social catastrophes as mass unemployment.

The Christian churches should reject the ideologies of both Communism and *laissez-faire* capitalism, and should seek to draw men away from the false assumption that these extremes are the only alternatives. Each has made promises which it could not redeem. Communist ideology puts the emphasis upon economic justice, and promises that freedom will come automatically after the completion of the revolution. Capitalism puts the emphasis upon freedom, and promises that justice will follow as a by-product of free enterprise ; that, too, is an ideology which has been proved false. It is the responsibility of Christians to seek new, creative solutions which never allow either justice or freedom to destroy the other.

V. The Social Function of the Church

The greatest contribution that the Church can make to the renewal of society is for it to be renewed in its own life in faith and obedience to its Lord. Such inner renewal includes a clearer grasp of the meaning of the Gospel for the whole life of men. This renewal must take place both in the larger units of the Church and in the local congregations. The influence of

worshipping congregations upon the problems of society is very great when those congregations include people from many social groups. If the Church can overcome the national and social barriers which now divide it, it can help society to overcome those barriers.

This is especially clear in the case of racial distinction. It is here that the Church has failed most lamentably, where it has reflected and then by its example sanctified the racial prejudice that is rampant in the world. And yet it is here that to-day its guidance concerning what God wills for it is especially clear. It knows that it must call society away from prejudice based upon race or colour and from the practices of discrimination and segregation as denials of justice and human dignity, but it cannot say a convincing word to society unless it takes steps to eliminate these practices from the Christian community, because they contradict all that it believes about God's love for all His children.

There are occasions on which the churches, through their councils or through such persons as they may commission to speak on their behalf, should declare directly what they see to be the will of God for the public decisions of the hour. Such guidance will often take the form of warnings against concrete forms of injustice or oppression or social idolatry. They should also point to the main objectives towards which a particular society should move.

One problem is raised by the existence in several countries of Christian political parties. The Church as such should not be identified with any political party, and it must not act as though it were itself a political party. In general, the formation of such parties is hazardous because they easily confuse Christianity with the inherent compromises of politics. They may cut Christians off from the other parties which need the leaven of Christianity, and they may consolidate all who do not share the political principles of the Christian party not only against that party, but against Christianity itself. Nevertheless, it may still be desirable in some situations for Christians to organise themselves into a political party for specific objectives, so long as they do not claim that it is the only possible expression of Christian loyalty in the situation.

But the social influence of the Church must come primarily from its influence upon its members through constant teaching and preaching of Christian truth in ways that illuminate the historical conditions in which men live and the problems which they face.

The Church can be most effective in society as it inspires its members to ask in a new way what their Christian responsibility is whenever they vote or discharge the duties of public office, whenever they influence public opinion, whenever they make decisions as employers or as workers or in any other vocation to which they may be called. One of the most creative

developments in the contemporary Church is the practice of groups of Christians facing much the same problems in their occupations to pray and take counsel together in order to find out what they should do as Christians.

In discussing the social function of the Church, Christians should always remember the great variety of situations in which the Church lives. Nations in which professing Christians are in the majority, nations in which the Church represents only a few percent of the population, nations in which the Church lives under a hostile and oppressive Government offer very different problems for the Church. It is one of the contributions of the ecumenical experience of recent years that churches under these contrasting conditions have come not only to appreciate one another's practices, but to learn from one another's failures and achievements and sufferings.

VI. Conclusion

There is a great discrepancy between all that has been said here and the possibility of action in many parts of the world. Obedience to God will be possible under all external circumstances, and no one need despair when conditions restrict greatly the area of responsible action. The responsible society of which we have spoken represents, however, the goal for which the churches in all lands must work, to the glory of the one God and Father of all, and looking for the day of God and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

II. BANGKOK (1949)

Prefatory Note :

The Eastern Asia Christian Conference which was convened at Bangkok in December 1949 was in several respects an important pioneering venture. It was in the first place the first regional study conference of its kind to be held in Asia and to be expressly concerned with the problems of the Christian witness in Asia. Secondly, it was a concrete manifestation of the fraternal relationship between the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council ; for the conference was sponsored jointly by these two bodies, and was composed of representatives both of the National Christian Councils of Eastern Asia and of the member churches of the World Council of Churches in that region.

The statement printed here is one of three in which the official findings of the conference were stated. It should be pointed out that since this document is simply the report of a study conference, it has no official status as a pronouncement of either of the sponsoring bodies ; nevertheless, as a product of the joint thinking of a number of leading East Asian Christians, it is an important document in the development of the Churches' thinking, particularly as background for the issues with which the Churches, and particularly those in East Asia, were concerned at Evanston.

FINDINGS OF THE EASTERN ASIA CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE BANGKOK, 3 – 11 DECEMBER 1949

THE CHURCH IN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL LIFE

THE Gospel proclaims that God's sovereignty includes all realms of life. Christ sitting at the right hand of God reigns, and the Church owes it to the world to remind it constantly that it lives under His judgment and grace. It is not the challenge of any ideology but the knowledge of the love of God in Christ for man that is the basis of the Church's social and political concern. In East Asia, the majority of people both in the rural and urban areas live in conditions of abject poverty and under oppressive systems that cramp their personality ; and it is the will of God that the

Church should witness to His redeeming love through an active concern for human freedom and justice.

The churches are called to be penitent for their sin of disobedience in this matter, before they can be renewed by God and be made channels of God's concern for man in society. This spiritual renewal will manifest itself in a transformation of the social life of the Church itself.

The struggle for and the attainment of political freedom has awakened the hitherto submerged peoples of East Asia to a new sense of dignity and historical mission. Those are basic elements in the revolutionary ferment which are at work in the contemporary revolts and power-conflicts in Asia. Ideologies have arisen to interpret this revolution to the common man and to lead him in his search for his destiny. Ideological conflicts are becoming increasingly integral to the political and social life of East Asia. The victory of Communist leadership in China has created an essentially new situation there and at the same time made the tensions more acute in other Asian lands.

The churches dare not assume a purely passive, indifferent or neutral attitude towards the crucial political and social issues of the times. It is, of course, not the task of the Church, as such, to enter into the arena of party-politics or to pronounce judgment on the technical aspects of government and society. However, it is the responsibility of the Church to rediscover and proclaim both to its own members as well as to those outside the basic truths declared in the Bible concerning the life of men in society and in the state, which no individual or government can disregard with impunity.

In this creative stage of Asian life, with its possibilities for good and evil, with its discovery of the worth of the human person but also with its tendencies towards nihilism and totalitarianism, the peoples of Asia, and particularly the younger generation, need the prophetic warning which only the Church can give about the foundations of human dignity and the common life. No fear of "politics", no fear of the consequences can excuse silence in such a decisive moment. The watchman who sees danger must blow his trumpet in the name of the Lord to warn the people.

Moral advice and the proclamation of moral ideas are insufficient. Only that which transcends morals, namely, the knowledge of the ultimate accountability of man and society to God and of the grace of God by which men, being forgiven, forgive one another, can be the foundation of personal responsibility and responsible society. The lack of the knowledge of God as the Judge of history is at the root of all tendencies towards nihilism and totalitarianism, in Asia and elsewhere. The proclamation of the Word of God, with a profound sense of its relevance to the ideological and political conflicts of the Orient, is therefore the central task of the Church in Asia.

In the final analysis, the prophetic ministry of the Church in the social and political order depends on the Church being truly a community of persons rooted in the Word of God, that is, worshipping congregations in which human worth and mutual responsibility are acknowledged and realized, and from which love goes out in work of service to the neighborhood. A true Christian congregation is the most effective prophetic witness to the divine righteousness in society, and the only answer to the challenge of political ideologies that view man solely in terms of his social and political functions. The Christian congregation has revolutionary significance in the East Asia political situation.

In considering communism, the Christian must distinguish between the social revolution which seeks justice and the totalitarian ideology which interprets and perverts it. The Christian Church must welcome the demand of the peoples for a fuller participation in the life of society at the level where power is exercised, since this is an expression of human dignity; and the rise of communism is a judgment on the churches for their failure to do so. Nevertheless the struggle for justice frustrates itself if the evil forces inherent in any human situation are not held in check. Because communism lacks a conception of the independence of moral reality over against power, it denies the supremacy of the moral law over power-politics and hence in the long run defeats the very purpose of the social revolution. This ideological error in communism, which turns a social revolution for justice into a new oppression, arises out of the self-righteousness of its militant atheism; and at this point the conflict between Christianity and communism is fundamental.

The political situation vis-à-vis communism varies widely in different countries. The revolution in China, though led by Communists, may not yet have manifested fully the evil consequences of the moral relativism integral to communism; and the churches' witness in China may be specifically to seek to provide a moral and religious foundation for the new sense of social freedom and economic justice among the people. In those countries where the possibility exists of transforming the social order democratically so that the means employed may not destroy the ends of justice, a true social democracy may be the answer to communism. We must recognize at this point, however, that democratic institutions and values divorced from their original Christian motive exist in a moral and religious vacuum and tend to break down. The Christian has the task of redefining and reinforcing these institutions and values in the light of the Christian faith, supplying a moral dynamic which they lack today. The fundamental rights of the human person cannot endure except as they are acknowledged as derived from man's relation to God in Christ. The Christian truth alone can judge and save democracy from breaking down in the face of the forces of totalitarianism of the left and the right, and make it truly social.

A duty rests upon the churches in East Asia to help through literature and other means both those within their fold and outside, especially youth, to understand the true nature of the social crisis in which they are, and the positive way to accept its challenge in the historical situation in which they are placed. The churches should take the initiative in bridging the gap between the Church and organized labor in town and village; and there is a whole problem of communication in this connection to which the churches should address themselves through evangelists who identify themselves in a costly way with the day-to-day struggle of labor and peasant for justice.

The most fundamental freedom is religious freedom. Nations are not truly free unless they recognize that each citizen has the right to decide for himself what religion he will profess, and that each religion has the right to proclaim its convictions without interference. We are glad to find that in most Asian lands these truths have been stated in the national constitutions. We hope that the religious liberty clause of the United Nations Charter of Human Rights will be increasingly acknowledged as the standard of action in this field, and urge that the churches endeavor to ensure that the Covenant of Human Rights, now being discussed in the United Nations Assembly, shall be ratified by their respective governments.

But we also are aware that the official acceptance of these principles often goes together with theories and policies which are in fact a denial of religious freedom. We hear of legislation which makes Christian evangelism virtually impossible in certain areas. We hear of discrimination against Christians and of material advantages being offered them if they will adopt the dominant religion of the country. We also are concerned about the trend in certain nations for the state to assume responsibility for the organization of the religious life, which is the province of religious communities and not of the state.

The Christian churches and national Christian councils must take an energetic stand against all these infringements of religious freedom and assist in educating the adherents of all religions towards a fuller understanding of the nature of religious liberty. Ignorance among the members of the churches of the issues involved seriously affects the cause of religious liberty. The repudiation of religious liberty by certain churches gravely weakens the Christian effort to defend the victims of religious oppression. The Christian Church cannot accept anything less than the freedom which allows it to be what it is, namely, the body through which the Lord Jesus Christ continually calls men and women from all nations, races and religions into communion with Himself. The Church dare not become a static minority; it must ever remain an ever-expanding, dynamic, free and open society.

Finally, it is necessary to remind ourselves that the Christian hope rests not on the historical situation in which we find ourselves but on God's revelation of the meaning and the end of history in the life, death and resurrection of Christ. While therefore it is the Christian responsibility to work for or defend a political and social order, informed by the Christian understanding of man and his destiny, as a sign and witness to the Christian hope, nevertheless the breakdown of political hopes does not destroy the freedom of the Christian man and the Christian Church.

" Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you. " (I Peter 1 : 3-4).

III. LUCKNOW (1952)

Prefatory Note:

A second conference of particular importance for the Christians of East Asia was that held in Lucknow in December 1952. Sponsored by the Study Department of the World Council of Churches, it was intended particularly to offer an opportunity for Asian Christian leaders to examine some of the major issues to come before the Evanston Assembly, especially in their relation to the East Asia situation.

The conference was enriched by the presence of a number of the members of the Central Committee of the World Council, whose meeting (the first to be held on Asian soil) followed immediately upon the study conference. The study conference itself enabled the participants to examine in particular detail the issues of Mission and Unity, the Responsible Society, and the problems of racial, class, and caste tensions. There was also discussion of the ways and means for providing fuller participation in Asia in the study programme of the World Council. The full report of the discussions of the conference, including the addresses and preliminary papers, has been published in a volume entitled Christ — the Hope of Asia.

The conference was especially fruitful in its discussions of social questions. The document which follows is the report of the discussion of the group which dealt with these questions. It reflects "the general concensus of opinion in the Group but is not to be regarded as a statement unanimously accepted throughout". The report was received by the conference as a whole.

THE ECUMENICAL STUDY CONFERENCE FOR EAST ASIA, LUCKNOW, 27-30 DECEMBER 1952

FINDINGS OF SECTION II: THE RESPONSIBLE SOCIETY IN EAST ASIA IN LIGHT OF THE WORLD SITUATION

A SOCIAL revolution is taking place in East Asia. This involves fundamental changes in the structure and conception of every aspect of social life. What is our responsibility as Christians in this situation?

We are concerned with social justice, that is to say with the development of social conditions in which human dignity and freedom can find their expression as befits the nature and destiny of man as a child of God. Communism has awakened and challenged our conscience to see the need for action. It is not, however, primarily the fear of Communism but our concern for our brother for whom Christ died, that should impel us to fulfil our social obligations. But a positive programme for social justice will help to meet the challenge of Communism.

There are certain key problems which must be faced in the countries of East Asia in order to promote a responsible order of society and to free men from the dehumanising effects of oppressive economic and social institutions.

I. Land Reform

In many countries of East Asia and particularly India this is a key problem. Land reform is needed to get rid of the old feudal land-holding relationships and improve the conditions of those who cultivate the soil and to give justice to the land-hungry peasant. Today over-population, lack of opportunities for industrial employment and migration have made the condition of the tenant worse than ever. Frequent famine is the result.

But land reform means not only the abolition of old privileges and outdated patterns of land tenure ; it also means the creation of social and legal conditions which will make it possible for a new and more just system of land development and community life to succeed. We are in general agreement that the following are some of the principles which are important in seeking a solution both to the problems of land tenure and rural development :

A. Land tenure

(1) Abolition of the old feudal landlord system is necessary. There is in most cases no moral justification for compensation of the landlord, by the state or the cultivator. Justice for the peasant requires that he should not be burdened with new indebtedness due to compensation *.

(2) Ownership by cultivators of farms in appropriate subsistence size is the goal.

(3) Freedom from the money-lender through making credit available to the peasant on cheap terms.

* This does not mean a general endorsement of expropriation of property but relates solely to the specific situation here encountered.

(4) Utilization without delay of unutilized land.

(5) Provision of land for landless peasants and settlement of the homeless.

B. Rural development measures

In order to realize the goals of a new society based on a new land system, a balanced programme of agriculture, rural industry, social education and cooperatives must be carried through. The use of pilot projects both by secular and Christian agencies has helped in the past and this programme needs to be greatly expanded in the future.

II. Planning for Production and Raising of the Standard of Living

Related closely to the problem of land are the questions of over-population and industrialisation. Today a majority of the people in East Asia live by land and this pressure needs to be reduced by a planned programme of industrialisation if there is to be a balanced development between agriculture and industry, and to improve the standards of living. The countries of East Asia are committed to the idea of the social planning state as a matter of fundamental social justice and concern for human welfare. It is one of the conditions of economic development in East Asia that basic and certain key industries must be nationalised, and at the same time due place must be given to private enterprise in the development of both large scale and small scale industries. In the present situation of East Asia however, it is the state which can take the initiative and encourage saving and investment by the people. There are resources of capital within the countries which need to be fully tapped by due measures for investment in new industries.

However, the achievement of industrial development on an adequate scale is only possible with technical assistance and economic aid from abroad. This means a vast expansion of this type of assistance. There are problems associated with foreign economic assistance which must be frankly and squarely faced :

(1) In the first place people in industrial countries must realise that their economic assistance to the underdeveloped countries on an adequate scale is a matter of social justice, i.e. arising out of a concern for man in his need wherever he lives and as a response to human solidarity. Moreover, there is the practical consideration that such assistance provides the only effective means of increasing the standard of living and thus answers the challenge of Communism. It is essential therefore that this aid should come with no political strings attached and with sensitivity to the economic and social goals of Asian peoples.

(2) There are many industries where private investment is desirable and is greatly needed. In order to encourage the flow of foreign private capital it will be necessary for the governments of East Asia to agree on a principle of proper compensation in case of nationalization.

Note :

The group recognized the importance of the problem of overpopulation in East Asia. For lack of time it was impossible to go into the many complex aspects of this issue. In promoting the idea of the "responsible society" in East Asia, the Church should be vitally concerned to indicate a Christian approach in this matter. Family planning and birth control, redistribution of population nationally and internationally and other means of dealing with the overpopulation problem raise profound political, social and ethical issues which need to be courageously and thoughtfully examined and lines of guidance given. Precisely because this involves the spiritual and material welfare of the family this question is of vital importance to the Church. The Study Conference felt that this subject is an appropriate one for ecumenical study and action.

III. The Effects of the World Situation on Social and Economic Reconstruction

The present world struggle with its hot and cold wars militates against progress in social reconstruction. We cite the following as evidences of this in East Asia :

(1) When American foreign policy is determined primarily by the criterion of anti-Communism it generally strengthens conservative and reactionary political groups in the East Asian scene and tend to weaken the forces of healthy social reform. This line is bound to be self-defeating because in the final analysis social and spiritual health is the best answer to Communism.

(2) Large scale rearmament reduces the capacity of the more developed countries to help the underdeveloped economies of East Asia. At the same time world tensions force the countries of East Asia to spend a disproportionate amount of their budget for defense and thus reduces the resources available for social development.

(3) The relatively large emphasis upon military power to defeat Communism, which is one of the important results of increasing international tension, involves in itself a threat to movements of national freedom and social justice. Military power has value mainly as a means of giving nations time to achieve positive democratic and responsible social change. This, however, tends to be overlooked in the increasing tensions of the world situation.

These considerations necessarily condition the attitude of Asian peoples to big power politics, their approach to the United Nations and to the efforts for peace. The absolute social necessity to reduce world tension to the minimum and to do everything possible to maintain even an unstable peace has led the Asian nations to adopt a more or less neutral or independent position regarding big power politics.

In order to provide an international basis for bringing into being the welfare state in East Asia, the idea of the Third Force has popular appeal. The British Commonwealth, the movement for European unity, and the Asian-Arab community of interest seem to provide a practical basis for the rise of a third force. But this is not yet a political fact because only through the economic and military assistance of America can the countries which desire to form themselves into a third force develop that degree of economic and political power which makes the third-force strategy possible. Moreover, while there is justification for an area of moral independence and judgment on concrete issues which might become a force for peace, this must not be conceived in such a rigid structural way as to be unrelated to the democratic forces in a country like the U.S. Even though the third force is not a political reality in the present situation, it is a spiritual reality throughout the world wherever the Church is providing its members with the basis for spiritual freedom against ideological politics and for making prophetic judgments on national and international issues. That is to say, that Christians have in the Church a basis for making decisions on any issue in terms of principle without antecedent commitment to either party in the conflict.

Regarding the specific question of conflict in Korea, the necessity for continuing to seek a negotiated peace and to contain the conflict needs to be stressed. Regarding the situation in Indo-China and Malaya and without going into every aspect of the situation the following points should be kept in mind by Christians in East Asia in the judgments they make :

(1) As members of countries which have struggled for freedom and self-determination the Christians in East Asia are bound to support the genuine movement of national freedom and social justice. Therefore, it is necessary to demand that the colonial powers recognise unequivocally the right of these nations to self-determination and to set up machinery for the transfer of power satisfactory to the democratic conscience of Asian peoples and within the structure of international law.

(2) There is an obligation for the colonial powers to see that national liberation is achieved in a democratic framework without the movement falling into the hands of Communism ; at the same time, it is possible that the necessity of military action might have arisen

at least in part because legitimate aspirations of the people were not recognized in time by the colonial powers, thus driving the nationalists into the Communist fold.

(3) The peril of the present military situations in Malaya and Indo-China is that on the one hand defense against Communism might become a means of suppressing the movement of national liberation and social justice in the country, and on the other hand the national liberation movements are in danger of being exploited by world Communism and abusive tyrannies. However, in any final appraisal it is necessary to make an assessment as to how far this peril has been overcome in these situations by a conscious attempt to meet legitimate national and social aspirations and thus secure the cooperation of progressive-minded people in the military action.

In view of these considerations any judgment of the situation must be made in the light of the national and international implications of the policy advocated.

The India-Pakistan tensions are sapping the moral and material resources of both countries and adversely affect social politics. Christians have the obligation to give a proper perspective and guiding lines in facing these problems and easing the tensions.

IV. The Role of the Church in Political and Social Action

The Amsterdam Assembly used the term "responsible society" to denote an alternative for Christians to laissez-faire capitalism and totalitarian Communism. It was defined as a society "where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and to the people whose welfare is affected by it". For us as Christians in East Asia a society is not responsible, when

(1) human rights and freedoms are not effectively promoted for all,
(2) social change and reform are promoted without respect for the integrity of the human person,
(3) its people do not possess full political sovereignty over their own affairs,
(4) men are discouraged or deterred by official action from freely accepting faith in Christ.

For us as Christians in East Asia a society is responsible where

(1) social justice is actively promoted,
(2) full development of natural resources is pursued,
(3) the fullest share possible of the national wealth is guaranteed to all,

(4) human rights and freedoms are effectively guaranteed,
(5) the people have full sovereignty for their own affairs,
(6) the principles of social and political life are in accordance with the concept of man as a person called to responsible existence in community.

We have defined some of the economic and social policies in such a society in relation to the concrete social issues of the countries of East Asia today. What is the role of the Church in realizing this goal ?

A. The Political Task

Christians must be prepared to recognize that the changes in the structure of society can be effected mainly through political action. Therefore they must be prepared to accept the necessity of political action as a means of promoting social justice. Christians must do everything possible to construct worthy instruments for responsible political action in order to realize the goal of the responsible society. This will mean in some cases the creation of healthy secular political movements ; however, under no circumstances should Christians organise themselves into religious political parties. In other cases the task is of judging and redeeming movements which are already working for social justice within a democratic framework, by helping to give them necessary moral and spiritual dynamic. In all cases the political movements will have to be redeemed both of their idolatrous and of their utopian pretensions in order to be of true service to man in the social and political order. It is only as Christians are able to enter into the field of collective political and social action that the Church will be able to exercise its prophetic ministry. There is need for the churches in East Asia to develop a social doctrine which will provide right criteria for making political judgment and decision in the East Asian situation, on the basis of the Christian faith. Youth especially needs this guidance.

B. The Church in Asian Society

At the different levels of the Church's life, in the local parish, in the national and international sphere of the Church's life, there is need to develop techniques and programmes of social service and action which will make a contribution towards humanizing the social and technical revolution which is taking place in all the social groups. This requires rethinking of the nature and structure of the Church's life in a changing society. The Church's aim should be to build up cells of true community-living as a means of humanizing the impersonal relationships of modern large societies. This is necessary to keep the social revolution a servant of social justice. In this respect the local congregation of the Church has a special revolutionary significance in East Asia.

In the collapse and disintegration of the cultural patterns of the countries of East Asia the Christian Church has a task to provide a principle of redefinition which makes possible the reintegration and development of a cultural basis conducive to responsible living. In this connection the Christian understanding of man has great relevance to East Asia. The religious vacuum which drives men to totalitarianism can be truly filled only by a faith in Christ as the Hope of the World.

If the Church is to fulfil its function in society as here set forth, it must repent and be transformed in its inner life according to the Word of God.

Recommendations

Our discussions have been very incomplete in many respects and therefore the five problems dealt with above — land, population, industrial development, effects of international relations, and the Church's role in Asian society — have to be studied with greater thoroughness. We recommend that ecumenical groups in Asia be urged to take up these subjects for further study with the assistance of laymen who are active in social, economic or political affairs. The participation of the churches in the study programme will contribute greatly to their preparation for the next Assembly at Evanston (USA) in 1954. We hope that this document will be used by the churches in the ongoing study programme. We also urge that this bocument be used by ecumenical study groups in churches outside Asia decause of its implications for their life and work.

IV. OTHER WORLD COUNCIL STATEMENTS SINCE AMSTERDAM

Prefatory Note:

This section offers three brief pronouncements of the Central and Executive Committees of the World Council of Churches which have been issued after the Amsterdam Assembly and which touch especially on the witness of the Churches in the social order. These documents help to show how the responsible bodies of the World Council have spoken on certain urgent social issues which have come to their attention since the first World Council Assembly; these papers are expressions of pressing concerns and convictions, and illustrate the way in which the ecumenical movement has taken its position within the context of principles developed by its study conferences and assemblies.

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES CHICHESTER, 9-15 JULY 1949 STATEMENT ON TOTALITARIANISM

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting at Chichester, is deeply disturbed by the increasing hindrances which many of its member Churches encounter in giving their witness to Jesus Christ. Revolutionary movements are on foot and their end no man can foresee. The Churches themselves must bear no small part of the blame for the resentments among the underprivileged masses of the world, since their own efforts to realise the brotherhood of man have been so weak. But justice in human society is not to be won by totalitarian methods. The totalitarian doctrine is a false doctrine. It teaches that in order to gain a social or political end everything is permitted. It maintains the complete self-sufficiency of man. It sets political power in the place of God. It denies the existence of absolute moral standards. It moulds the minds of the young in a pattern opposed to the message of the Gospel. It sanctions the use of all manner of means to overthrow all other views and ways of life.

We call statesmen and all men who in every nation seek social justice to consider this truth: a peaceful and stable order can only be built upon

foundations of righteousness, of right relations between man and God and between man and man. Only the recognition that man has ends and loyalties beyond the State will ensure true justice to the human person. Religious freedom is the condition and guardian of all true freedom. We declare the duty and the right of the Church to preach the Word of God and to proclaim the will of God. We appeal to the Churches to interpret and apply God's will to all realms of life. We warn the Churches in all lands against the danger of being exploited for worldly ends. In the countries where the State is antagonistic to the Christian religion or indeed wherever full religious freedom is denied, we ask all Christians to remember that the liberty which they receive from their Lord cannot be taken away by the violence or threat of any worldly power, or destroyed by suffering. Therefore we urge the Churches to bear clear corporate witness to the truth in Christ and their ministers to continue to preach the whole Gospel. We urge all Christians to stand firm in their faith, to uphold Christian principles in practical life and to secure Christian teaching for their children.

All who bear the Christian name must be true to the living God. God calls us all to pray earnestly for one another and to be faithful at all seasons in our personal witness. In loyalty to the word that sounded forth from Amsterdam we shall "stay together", in the certain knowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free."

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES BIÈVRES, 30 JANUARY - 1 FEBRUARY 1951 LETTER TO THE MEMBER CHURCHES

Note: *Since this letter dealt with other than social questions only the relevant portions are included here.*

THERE is something underlying the explosive character of the world scene which constantly exercised our minds. It is the vast upsurge of peoples of every race, nation and creed. Some countries have been the scene of far-reaching social reform. Over 700 million people formerly dependent, have recently attained independence. Other peoples are still seeking independence. At the same time the widespread and rightful demand for equality of personal status and for release from poverty and economic oppression remains unmet. Little wonder that the offer of civil rights and freedoms loses its appeal when people are wholly obsessed by the daily struggle against hunger and want.

Everywhere the victim is *man*. Often he is treated as no better than an object, or at best a tool, rather than as a responsible person. He hears

much about peace, but for the sake of peace, he is told either to hate or to rearm. He hears much about freedom, but in the name of freedom, he is in fact deprived of liberty sometimes even from his childhood. He hears much about human rights, but he lives in a world of exploitation, deportations, concentration camps, arbitrary barriers and total war. To bring the comfort and strength of the Gospel to confused and threatened man, whatever his station in life, is the great task of the Church. Only thus can he find joy to live and to love, and learn anew the meaning of hope and peace. Whatever danger he may face, he will be sustained by the full assurance of the sovereignty of God and of man's worth in God's sight.

We believe that in these truths — truths which stand for ever in the Church East and West — are the source and impulse of our endeavour. In the light of them we tried to face baffling and almost intractable problems. Uppermost in our minds were those of the totalitarian doctrine of man in society, the menace to peace, and the denial of social justice...

This brings us to the difficult question of arms and of rearmament. Here we can only say this. Within the World Council constituency there are many different opinions about rearmament and indeed about the attitude of the Christian towards the use of arms. Some of these difficulties were reflected in our own discussions. We considered the conditions which have brought us to our present pass, but concluded that our attention should be centered on the existing crisis. It is this. The governments and many people of the West have come to fear that the more powerful of the Communist nations are ready to extend the area of Communist influence by means of force and, as a result, they are rapidly rearming. In Eastern countries, there is a growing fear that these developments might lead sooner or later to the outbreak of a preventive war. Thus rearmament had become the main and general emphasis everywhere. Its declared purpose is peace, but it can in reality endanger both peace and security and social justice is seriously threatened. In these circumstances, it is an urgent Christian concern — in fact, a concern of all men of good will — that armaments, whatever their necessity, do not dominate the whole life of national and international society. We are convinced that it is the duty of all the Churches to champion peace with justice. The Churches which still have real opportunities to influence government policies have a special duty.

We take the view that the Churches must urge that the new armament programme be exclusively devoted to the purpose of security. We must seek by constant vigilance to prevent the possession of power from precipitating violence. We must not allow the fabric of social justice to be destroyed.

... One of the gravest dilemmas the nations are in consists in the danger that rearmament will itself drain the vigour out of social recons-

truction. Thus governments will aggravate the very disease which they seek to heal. We must struggle that this shall not be the case. All nations which possess great economic and industrial resources, must promptly afford economic and technical assistance on such a scale as will eventually assure an effective response to the needs of the underprivileged. Effective co-operation must be achieved in this field, too, through the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies.

This seems to us to mean imaginative thinking and action of a wholly new order. The peoples have seen the vision of social justice ; it is for us to help to transform it into reality. All people in privileged countries, particularly Christians, must strive to enter sympathetically into the social demands of the needy. " From each according to his ability to each according to his need " has its roots in the teaching of Jesus.

We are at a loss how to share with you the sense of urgency with which we were impressed as we discussed this matter. The Churches have by no means neglected social action, but they have fallen short of what they should have done and, often, of what they would have wished to do. It is clear to us that personal sacrifice must be accepted if the hungry are to be fed and the naked to be clothed, and Christians, above all, should accept it with joy.

We would assure our Christian brethren under totalitarian régimes that we rejoice with them in the evidence that the Word of God makes its power felt among them. As Christians in East and West think of and pray for each other, let them do so with the mind that was in Christ Jesus and therefore look not on their own things but on the things of others (Phil. 2 : 1-11).

The ends of true peace and social justice must be the constant concern of all Christian men and of all Churches.

As we continue to face the perils and perplexities of our day, let us in humility and faith turn to the only source of abiding strength, praying from every corner of the earth :

> Almighty God our heavenly Father, guide we beseech Thee the Nations of the world into the way of justice and truth and establish among them that peace which is the fruit of righteousness,
> through Jesus Christ our Lord,
>
> *Amen.*

CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES LUCKNOW, 31 DECEMBER 1952 - 8 JANUARY 1953 LETTER TO THE MEMBER CHURCHES

Brethren :

The Central Committee of the World Council of Churches has held its first meeting on Asian soil. While conscious of needs in many parts of the world, here at Lucknow we have been confronted with some of the vital problems of Asia today. Through our contacts with leaders of Church and State, through the reports of the East Asian Study Conference organized by the World Council prior to our own meeting, and in discussion together, certain concerns have come to us with a new sense of urgency. We desire to share with you, the member Churches of the World Council, considerations which surely mean increased responsibilities for the Church both in Asia and elsewhere.

We are grateful for the fact of the ecumenical movement because it helps us to face the situation within a world-wide Christian fellowship. The fact that we are members one of another, and confront these difficulties together, places new obligations on us all.

As the servants of One Who speaks to us of the cup of water and daily bread we must recognize that we are confronted in Asia by whole peoples in desperate need of food, clothing and shelter. We must support the efforts of all those working for material and social welfare. The people of Asia are also seeking well-ordered political life and true community. Above all we see their need for an ultimate faith by which to live and for knowledge of Christ who alone can impart this.

The struggle for, and the attainment of, national independence, the break-up of the old village structure of society and the attempt to build up a society based on industrial techniques, the challenge to old customs and traditions through new conceptions of fundamental rights, the transformations in the status of women and the pattern of the family, all these indicate the vast dimensions of the revolution.

1. The Imperative of Social Justice

Our meeting has brought home to us the poverty and distress of these peoples as well as their efforts to grapple with their problems. They are demanding social conditions which are worthy of human beings. Churches all over the world must ask how they can help the people of Asia in their

efforts to attain a standard of living which meets basic human needs, and in their search for a more just social and economic order.

The Church in Asia has the crucial task of helping to provide the true moral and spiritual dynamic for the peoples longing for social justice and peace. Without this dynamic their longing cannot be realized and may easily be betrayed by false hopes.

To meet these needs, the full support of the Christian community in under-developed countries must be rallied behind the efforts of their governments and peoples to tackle their own economic problems.

The Churches in the more developed countries must urge their peoples and Governments to do everything possible to strengthen programmes of technical assistance, without which such efforts in Asia cannot succeed. This assistance will be effective and welcome only when it expresses a concern for man and his needs wherever he lives, and is a manifestation of human solidarity. It must therefore be given with sensitivity to the economic, political and social goals of the peoples of Asia.

Rearmament and military tension seriously reduce the resources available for industrial development in Asia. They also create an attitude of mind which leads to national and international policies in which positive programmes of social reconstruction tend to be neglected. The Christian Churches must help their peoples and Governments to reckon with the threat to the social development of these countries, which is created by tensions and power rivalries.

2. The Christian Basis of Political Freedom

These countries which are attempting to construct political institutions that give form to their new sense of freedom are forced to look for the cultural and religious foundations of responsible social life. In this situation the Churches of Asia must continue to make clear that the fundamental rights of man will only be firmly grounded in so far as these are related to the Christian view of man as a child of God in Christ. Freedom can only be retained in a society which is based on the integrity of the individual.

The Christian understanding of man is directly relevant to the search for new foundations for society. Churches rooted in Eastern soil must be helped in making this witness real and effective. Only as the Church can offer actual demonstrations of the creation of Christian character, of community living, brotherly service and reconciling fellowship will it fulfil its redemptive task in the midst of the changes taking place in all aspects of Asian society. Here the local congregation of the Church has an indispensable part to play.

3. The Call to Missionary Obedience and Unity

The missionary task of the Church is more important than ever in Asia today. Amid elemental hunger, the uprooting of life and the struggle to rebuild, the fundamental need is still man's need for God. It must be known that within the events of our time His Presence is to be discerned in judgment and blessing. Christ alone makes this knowledge possible in all its redemptive power. To preach Him and bear witness to Him amidst the claims of other faiths is a task of burning urgency. Yet we have scarcely begun to encounter and understand the other great religions of Asia on their own ground.

Again, the fulfilment by churches of their missionary task brings particular responsibilities in Asia. The churches are called to make their life a witness to social justice and political freedom. Only so can they find an opening in the hearts of these peoples for the greater treasure entrusted to the Church.

The overwhelming evangelistic task in Asia is the concern of the whole Church. This responsibility now falls primarily upon the churches in Asia. But the Western churches need to redouble, and not slacken, their missionary endeavour in Asia. Yet this contribution from the West must be undertaken in a spirit of partnership with the younger Churches, and along lines which will strengthen them for their own missionary obedience.

No one can enter today into the Asian scene without realizing at every hand the urgency with which many of the churches and Christian people are crying for unity. Where Christians find themselves as a small minority in the midst of vast communities of non-Christian peoples the call of God to all of us to seek for unity is powerfully reinforced by the demands and circumstances of the situation, and by their own task of witness.

There are dangers in this very sense of urgency which cannot be disregarded. Unity may sometimes be looked upon as a solution of all problems. It may be sought without due regard for truth in doctrine and soundness in order. But, having said this, we feel bound to state that the churches of the West are called to show great understanding and a readiness to give full freedom and continuing support to their brethren in the East as they seek to find God's purpose for them in their own time and place.

" Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight. "

V. EVANSTON (1954)

Prefatory Note:

The delegates to the Evanston Assembly were divided into six sections, one of which dealt with the topic, "Social Questions — The Responsible Society in a World Perspective".

The studies on the Responsible Society carried on by the Study Department of the World Council of Churches between 1949 and 1954 gave new direction to the discussion of social issues at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches held at Evanston, Ill. (USA), August 14-31, 1954.

Prior to the Assembly several long memoranda on contemporary social problems were submitted to the churches for study and comment, distributed by an official Preparatory Commission. A world survey of Christian social thought and action was also provided as background material for the Assembly. Several ecumenical study conferences had been held in preparation for the Assembly, and the one at Lucknow in 1952, which took up some of the Assembly topics, made a particularly important contribution on the subject of "The Responsible Society in East Asia in the Light of the World Situation". (See III above.)

The Chairman of the section was Dr. C. L. Patijn (Holland), and Dr. John C. Bennett (USA) and Bishop Sobrepena (Philippine Islands) were vice-chairmen. The report on social questions which is printed below was "received by the Assembly and commended to the churches for study and appropriate action".

INTRODUCTION

CHRISTIAN social responsibility is grounded in the mighty acts of God, who is revealed in Jesus Christ our Lord. He has created the world, and all time is embraced within His eternal purpose. He moves and acts within history as the everliving God. The center of world history is the earthly life, the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. As has been affirmed in the Report on the Main Theme, in Him God entered history decisively, to judge and to forgive. In Him are revealed the present plight of man, and the end toward which the world is moving.

He has established with men a living relationship of promise and commandment in which they are called to live in faithful obedience to His purpose. The promise is the gift of abundant life as children of God for those who hear and follow the divine call. The commandment is that men should love God and their neighbors. In the call to responsible social action, the promise and the commandment of the righteous and loving God require us to recognise that in every human being Christ Himself comes to claim our service. Responding to God's love in Christ, and being aware of His final judgment, Christians will act responsibly. The call to social righteousness is sustained by the sure hope that the victory is with God, Who in Christ has vanquished the powers of evil and in His own day will make this victory fully manifest in Christ.

Man and all the powers of this world are under the sovereignty of their Maker who calls men in families, societies, nations, and all human groups to responsibility under Him. From Christ men receive the direction for their service, the obligation to share heartily in the world's work and daily tasks, and the responsibility to seek a better social and political life. Our hope in Christ enables us to know that there are limitations set upon every human ideal and achievement, so that we never make an idol out of any social cause, institution, or system. Moreover, because our hope is in Christ, we are saved from frustration where our efforts to influence public opinion or social action are seemingly in vain and we are saved from despair when all human hopes collapse.

The churches have come to realize more fully that they have a duty to society as part of their mission in the world. The scope of this mission is defined in the inclusive reports of this Assembly, but its relation to the responsible society is the assignment of this report.

Our hope in Christ does not offer technical answers or specific solutions which statesmen and experts have not found. But in the context of Christian faith we gain new insights into our dilemmas and ways to overcome them. In all the specific tasks with which this report deals we attempt to give expression to that hope.

I. The Meaning of the Responsible Society

The first assembly of the World Council of Churches at Amsterdam coined the term "The Responsible Society". It was stated that the responsible society is a society "where freedom is the freedom of men who acknowledge responsibility to justice and public order and where those who hold political authority or economic power are responsible for its exercise to God and to the people whose welfare is affected by it".

"Responsible society" is not an alternative social political system, but a criterion by which we judge all existing social orders and at the same time

a standard to guide us in the specific choices we have to make. Christians are called to live responsibly, to live in response to God's act of redemption in Christ, in any society, even within the most unfavorable social structures.

This report will deal mainly with large-scale institutions. But the realization of a responsible society must be achieved in small groups as well as in large. Human living acquires meaning and depth only in relations with other persons, and since an individual can have direct and close contact only with a limited number of people, the art of social living has to be learned in small groups.

The most fundamental of these is the family. For this reason the Churches must give strong warning against the widespread disruption of family life. The family itself needs to be protected; for this the witness of the Christian family is all-important. More attention should be given to the conditions which cause the forcible separation of families and every effort should be made to reunite those who have been separated. For right development into responsible adulthood, children need security and love, and the discipline which family life preeminently secures. Disintegration here is closely related to disintegration in the larger groupings of society. In predominantly non-Christian countries, the building of a Christian family life implies in some cases a rupture with old non-Christian family systems. The specifically Christian attitude toward the family should be clarified within different cultural circumstances in order to strengthen the community life of Christians in its most elemental form.

But the family is not the only group in which man can practice the art of living as "little men in big societies". There is often in modern life a family egotism which hinders social responsibility rather than furthering it. We are called to serve in other communities also. People cooperating in the same work or in the same factory should form nuclei of human relationships in a technical world; for young people teamwork and cooperation with friends sometimes provides the best opportunities for learning the art of living together; where in some parts of the world the village community or tribal group still offers a protection for human relations, they should be preserved and adapted to modern circumstances.

The Christian congregation itself should be a visible center of community and a base for local social responsibility. Its worship should be discernibly relevant to the total life of the society in which it is set. It must break down those barriers within its own life which deny fellowship so that it may begin to show in its action a solution to the real problems troubling the local community. It should also be concerned with the possibilities of renewing personal life through the corporate life of small groups. And it must, equally with the family, beware of egotism that prevents its sharing in the wider life of the church or of the community as a whole.

A. The Structure and Function of the State

The Oxford Conference on Church, Community and State in 1937 gave the following definition of the function of the state with regard to justice: "Since we believe in the Holy God as the source of justice, we do not consider the state as the ultimate source of law, but rather its guarantor. It is not the lord but the servant of justice. There can be for the Christian no ultimate authority but very God."

True justice is dynamic and its forms must vary to meet changing needs. Those who seek it should be made sensitive by love to discover such needs where they have been neglected. Justice involves the continuous effort to overcome those economic disadvantages which are a grievous human burden and which are incompatible with equal opportunity for people to develop their capacities. Justice requires the development of political institutions which are humane as they touch the lives of people, which provide protection by law against the arbitrary use of power, and which encourage responsible participation by all citizens.

In recent years the Churches have had to give fresh thought to the nature and functions of the state. No one form of government has a universal claim on Christians, but any political system must include some elements without which it tends to become an oppressive tyranny. For these, Christians should work by active participation in political affairs. In some situations where it may at present seem impossible to work directly for them, the Christian has chiefly the obligation to do what he can to defend other persons against particular acts of cruelty and injustice.

Christians should work for the embodiment of the Responsible Society in political institutions by emphasizing the following:

(1) Every person should be protected against arbitrary arrest or other interference with elementary human rights.

(2) Every person should have the right to express his religious, moral, and political convictions. This is especially important for those who belong to minorities.

(3) Channels of political action must be developed by which the people can without recourse to violence change their governments.

(4) Forms of association within society which have their own foundations and principles should be respected, and not controlled in their inner life, by the state. Churches, families, and universities are dissimilar examples of this non-political type of association.

The Oxford statement applies in the following way to the function of the state with regard to social justice in economic life. While the state is sometimes the enemy of freedom, under many circumstances the state is the

only instrument which can make freedom possible for large sectors of the population. The state is not the source of social justice, but it must be its guardian, ready if necessary to accept responsibility to counteract depression or inflation and to relieve the impact of unemployment, industrial injury, low wages, and unfavorable working conditions, sickness and old age. But in doing so the state remains the servant not the lord of social justice. Therefore, we must warn against the danger that the union of political and economic power may result in an all-controlling state. In contradistinction to actions of the state it is the task of the non-governmental sectors in economic life to be the guardian of responsible private action in society. But within the private sector, both employers and employees in all their varied organizations in their turn are the servant, and not the lord of freedom and welfare.

When necessary in the public interest, the state must intervene to prevent any centre of economic or social power which represents partial interest from becoming stronger than itself, for the state alone has the power and the authority under God to act as trustee for society as a whole.

At all stages of political development and in the face of all the problems noted here, a Christian community must act as a conscience for the nation and ceaselessly remind all who hold power of God's purpose for the nation and of God's judgment upon their use of power.

B. Problems of Economic Life

New Trends. One of the most important features of the modern world is the way in which society has increasingly taken the control of economic affairs out of the sphere of "automatic responses". Full employment policies, the spread of state action in economic life, and the growing economic power of organized groups of employers, employees, farmers, and professional people have brought great changes in the highly industrialized countries.

The need for inter-governmental cooperation in economic affairs accompanies the increase in domestic state action. In some areas, such as Europe, social reconstruction and supranational integration go hand in hand and challenge many old political and economic ideas. At the same time, the priority given to full employment policies in many countries strengthens tendencies towards economic self-sufficiency and can threaten international economic cooperation.

The new emphasis on state initiative and international organization in the development of economic life has been accompanied by a fresh recognition of the importance of relative freedom in enterprise and of the regulating role of the price system. Many socialists have come to appreciate the

importance of the private sector of the economy and the necessity for the energetic, enterprising and expert business man as well as being aware of the dangers of centralized government.

New Problems. These developments suggest that disputes about "capitalism" and "socialism" disguise the more important issues in the field of economic and social policy. Each word is applied to many different social forms and economic systems. It is not the case that we have merely a choice between two easily distinguishable types of economic organization. Private enterprise takes many shapes in different countries at different stages and in different parts of one economy and is profoundly affected by the forms of government regulation. The operations of the state in business also take various forms, such as post offices run by government departments, supply of electric power or gas by local authorities, and national or state public corporations. In all types of economy there is to be found a variety of forms ; there is no one pattern that is universally valid. There are also various types of cooperative organization. In some countries the "welfare state" or the "mixed economy" suggests a new pattern of economic life ; others may be regarded as "capitalist", but the capitalism of today is very different from the capitalism of even twenty or thirty years ago. The concrete issues in all countries concern the newly-evolving forms of economic organization, and the relative roles of the state, organized groups and private enterprises.

The Church's Role. The Church is concerned with economic life, because of God's concern for human beings who work to produce goods and services, who use them, and for whom business exists. The Church cannot uncritically support any particular form of organization as it exists in any particular country, but should be especially concerned with the following moral implications of economic life :

(1) State action in recent years has taken many new forms. The state must do those things for the economy that private industry cannot do properly, such as planning for urban development, stimulating industrial expansion and soil conservation, some types of large-scale industrial and agricultural research, and guidance of the distribution of industry. But state action needs to be decentralized, limited, and adaptable. The Christian should be ready to welcome fruitful new experiments, whether in the field of state action, private business or cooperative endeavor.

(2) Efficient production is important as well as fair distribution. Much Christian social thought in the past has tended to ignore the former and stress primarily the latter. Laziness and waste are sins before God no less than selfishness and greed.

(3) The churches have been properly critical of monopolistic practices, and of the effects of many irresponsible business practices on people and

society generally. But they also need to understand and lay stress on the valuable contribution which the skilled executive has to make to society, irrespective of the form of ownership or organization. At its best the business system has provided incentives for the responsible initiative and hard work which produces economic progress, and has embodied the wisdom of decentralized decisions and widely distributed power. These are virtues needed in any system.

(4) The churches must never fail to recognize that the worker should have a status in society which accords with his responsibilities and his human dignity. Much has been done in recent years, but Christians are too ready to forget how much needs to be done, even in countries where social security and re-distribution of income and power have gone far.

(5) One of the most important economic roles is that played by the world's farmers. In some countries they have met urgent needs by extraordinary advances in productivity. For the feeding of increasing populations with a better diet, radical changes in farming methods will have to be carried through in many other countries, but always with due regard to the human consequences. The churches should recognize the justice of the farmers' demand for a reasonable measure of security of income; but even as they advance their legitimate demands for justice, farmers must resits the temptations to exhaust the soil, to exploit those who work for them, or to take unfair advantage of the consumers.

There are a number of places where our Christian concern for society makes us uneasy about the existing situation or where there is a demand for positive action.

(1) We can never forget the warnings in the Bible about the dangers to the rich man. In our day those warnings must be applied to the temptations facing everyone in a rich society. The tendencies to create unlimited wants, to overemphasize material values and to appeal to motives of social pride, envy and lust, stimulated by irresponsible salesmanship and advertising, are dangerous and need curbing.

(2) Not only increased production but a stronger regard for equity in the distribution of wealth and income is also required. At the same time such factors as the place of incentive and the desire to avoid regimentation necessitate a measure of inequality in modern economic life. But every society should recognize the extent to which great contrasts between rich and poor destroy fellowship and undercut the political institutions of a responsible society.

(3) The churches have a duty to promote adequate assistance on the national and international level for children, the sick, the old, the refugees, and other economically weak groups, by means of church organizations, voluntary societies, and local or national governments.

It is the duty of the Christian to work for improved national or local welfare legislation and for the provision of adequate medical care. It may also be his duty to fight against any tendency for the state to monopolize social welfare activity.

(4) Serious problems arise from the great importance of organized groups, such as trade unions and associations of employers, farmers, or professional people. Christians can bear witness that these groups must be responsible to the whole of society, that their leadership must be responsible to their members, and that the members must participate responsibly in the organization.

We welcome the role of responsible trade unions in fighting exploitation and promoting a humane environment for workers, and also the growing cooperation between labour and management to increase the material resources available for human welfare.

(5) Christians have a duty to bring to the attention of their governments that national policies have effects on the lives and welfare of peoples in other countries. National economic and political stability, justice, freedom and peace are dependent upon world economic and political stability. National and international policies are far more closely interrelated than ever before. Excessive barriers to trade can create economic crises elsewhere. The greater the economic power, the larger is the responsibility in this field. The richer countries particularly must remember that one test of their policies is their effect on the underdeveloped areas of the world.

II. The Church in Relation to Communist-Noncommunist Tension

The conflict between communists and noncommunists affects the political and economic life of nearly every nation in the world, and creates divisions even within the Church regarding the right attitude toward communism. Only as Christians work for social justice and political freedom for all, and rise above both fear and resentment, will they be fully able to meet the challenge of this conflict. It is our concern for the brother for whom Christ died that should impel us to fulfil our obligations in the face of this conflict. In this way Christians living in different parts of our divided world may contribute to the creation of the necessary conditions for different systems to live side by side. This concern of Christians does not alter the mission of the churches to bear witness in the face of all atheistic and self-righteous ideologies.

The churches at Oxford and Amsterdam indicated the various points of conflict between the Christian faith and Marxist ideology and totalitarian

practice *. We wish to reaffirm this statement about these basic conflicts, as well as to stress that the growth of communism is a judgment upon our modern societies generally for past or present indifference to social injustice, in which the Church is also involved.

In one form or another the conflict about communism has important consequences for the political and economic life of nearly every nation. In some regions of the world, especially in Asia, Africa, and Latin America communism has strong appeal. Here poverty, misery, the newly-aroused aspirations for freedom and security, doubts as to the effectiveness of democracy, and the tendency of those in power to brand all reforms as communistic, combine to make the promises of communism attractive in spite of the totalitarianism which accompanies it. For many there seems to be no alternative which will bring essential social change quickly enough. There are Christians who think that they can cooperate with the communist movement in their countries because they see it as the way to a new order of material abundance and greater justice. We must ask : " Can communism be an effective instrument for these limited purposes or must we give warning that, where such social and economic methods are introduced, the total communist scheme will come to dominate the minds of men as well as their institutions ? "

Christians must consider carefully the serious effects the conflict with communism is already producing : for example, the tendencies in democratic societies to lower their standards of civil liberties, and sometimes to strengthen reactionary forces in countries abroad. Preoccupation with the real dangers of subversion in many situations has led to a less widely recognized and more subtle danger to society from those who identify as subversive any unpopular opinions or associations. Enemies of essential human freedom appear on both the political right and the political left and Christians have a duty to strengthen the forces of freedom which fight on both fronts. Yet we must not forget the love due to the neighbor who stands for an ideology which we reject.

There is a particular danger that nations will over-emphasize the military aspect in their defense against communism and fail to see the need

* At Amsterdam the churches referred to the following points of conflict : "1) The communist promise of what amounts to a complete redemption of man in history ; 2) the belief that a particular class by virtue of its role as the bearer of a new order is free from the sins and ambiguities that Christians believe characteristic of all human existence ; 3) the materialistic and deterministic teachings, however they may be qualified, that are incompatible with belief in God and with the Christian view of man as a person, made in God's image and responsible to Him ; 4) the ruthless methods of communists in dealing with their opponents ; 5) the demand of the party on its members for an exclusive and unqualified loyalty which belongs only to God, and the coercive policies of communist dictatorship in controlling every aspect of life."

for reforms in political, social, and economic institutions as an important part of their response to its challenge. These nations can have greater influence on the course of the present world conflict if they show their ability to deal justly with the legitimate aspirations of the dependent peoples, to cope successfully and creatively with their own social problems, and to remain self-critical.

It will be the task of the churches to point to the dangers inherent in the present situation : on the one hand the temptation to succumb to anti-communist hysteria and the danger of a self-righteous assurance concerning the political and social systems of the West ; on the other hand the temptation to accept the false promises of communism and to overlook its threat to any responsible society.

Christians in communist and non-communist countries are called to hold each other in special brotherly concern and prayer across all barriers. Those of us in non-communist lands affirm our unity with these churches in the ecumenical fellowship and the bond of the Spirit, and our confidence in their loyalty to Christ. We rejoice with them in the Christian witness which they make in these new circumstances and seek to understand and affirm our fellowship with them in their temptations and in their Christian hope, for this witness and these temptations are relevant also to our social responsibility. Therefore, we are presented with a number of questions which challenge Christians in communist as well as in non-communist countries in different ways. All Christians must wrestle with the following questions which are urgent in a special way in communist lands.

1. What are the ways and what is the content of Christian witness in the face of atheistic ideologies ?

2. What is the social significance of the existence of the Church as an inclusive worshipping and evangelistic community ? How can the life of the congregation in all its forms, including its pastoral and social work, affect society ? How does the Church's teaching ministry relate to state education under a communist regime ?

3. What reforms are necessary in the life and structure of the Church ? What are the values and dangers of agreements between Church and State ?

4. At what points can the Church and Christians cooperate with governments in their plans for social reconstruction ? What are the limits of this cooperation ? How does Christian social responsibility avoid both surrender to communism and the temptations of a negative resistance ?

5. What new forms of prophetic ministry are required ? How far are public statements by the Church on social questions effective ?

6. What Christian witness can church members bear in their daily work ? What is the place of suffering in Christian social witness ?

7. What, if any, is the Church's responsibility for standards of truth

in all fields ? For pre-communist social and cultural traditions ? What is the relation between a Christian demand and a Communist demand for repentance for past social injustices ?

The following questions are especially urgent for Christians in non-communist countries :

1. What are the special temptations of the church in a traditional " Christian society " ?
2. Does secularism in the non-communist world differ from the materialism in the communist world ?
3. What is the content of Christian witness toward the large mass of secularized people ? How far is this secularization due to the class nature of the Church and the accommodation of its life and message to bourgeois interests and values ? What reforms in the life of the Church are necessary to meet these challenges ?
4. How far are the churches in non-communist lands, genuinely prophetic in their relation to society and the state ?
5. What is the responsibility of the churches in non-communist lands for the cultivation of traditions of freedom and community over against the growing pressure toward social conformity ?

III. The Problems in the Economically Underdeveloped Regions

Society in Asia, Africa, and some parts of Latin America today is characterized by the urge to national self-determination in political and economic matters. There is a growing shift of social, economic and political authority from those persons and institutions who by inheritance or tradition possessed it, to those who exercise it because of the function they perform. The peoples of these countries have awakened to a new sense of fundamental human rights and justice and they are in revolt against enslaving political, economic, religious, and social conditions. There is also the pressure to achieve changes rapidly. All of the processes of social development — increasing productivity, raising standards of living, democratization, and the rest– which have taken centuries in the West, demand in these areas to be completed together and within decades. The temptation is to use irresponsible methods of collectivism, whether of the right or of the left, in the desire for rapid results. In such circumstances the Church has the duty to point the way to responsible society and herself to follow it.

The Ecumenical Study Conference, Lucknow, India, in December, 1952, presented a number of specific points which can be faced and tackled only as world problems and should be the concern of all the churches.

1) *Development of political institutions :* Political institutions must be developed which are strong enough to accomplish the needed social and economic changes while extending and promoting fundamental human rights and freedom.

It is necessary to redefine democratic, political, economic, and social values and objectives in the new context of Asian life and in the light of a more realistic understanding of human nature than can be provided by utopian concepts.

2) *Land reform and rural development :* Absentee landlordism and other unjust forms of land tenure and privilege, not least where the churches themselves are guilty of such practices, must be abolished. At the same time, positive measures should make possible new systems of productive land use and community life. In the rural areas, bold programs of agriculture, rural industry, social education, cooperatives and the provision of rural credit and professional services are urgently needed. The rural community development program in India recognizes agriculture as a way of life as well as an occupation. The churches can give concrete assistance in this development everywhere.

3) *Industrial development :* In order to raise standards of living underdeveloped countries properly insist upon developing industry. Ways should be found of obtaining capital within the country without endangering standards of consumption ; technical assistance and foreign capital should be provided without doing violence to social objectives ; the role of the state and public and private enterprise in industry need to be examined in the light of local circumstances ; forms of industry which can be integrated in suitable ways with village community life need to be found. In countries where industries are being developed rapidly, e.g., Brazil, India, Japan, Mexico, and South Africa, special care should be given to protect new industrial laborers and their families from the dehumanizing factors which often accompany such industrialization.

4) *Population :* Many underdeveloped countries, especially in Asia, are very densely populated in relation to their resources. Redistribution of population nationally and internationally, family planning and birth control are burning questions. The profound ethical, political and social issues which they raise need to be courageously examined and guidance should be given by the churches.

5) *Independence and the responsibilities of interdependence :* A number of the underdeveloped countries have attained national freedom and full sovereignty after a colonial period. There are difficulties in adaptation to an international situation where national sovereignty in political and economic affairs, especially for weaker nations, is necessarily limited by the facts of interdependence. At the same time they need capital from the outside for development and industrialization. The flow of capital from former colonial powers having dried up, they find it difficult to mobilize the necessary capital, since private investors hesitate to enter the scene without specific guarantees, and public funds without political strings attached are

hard to procure. Unless the responsibilities of interdependence are clearly defined and accepted by all concerned, this impasse could easily lead to bitterness and a sense of frustration.

The churches must be especially concerned with the way in which the present world struggle with its hot and cold wars militates against progress in the social reconstruction of the underdeveloped countries. It is significant for Christians on all continents that the Ecumenical Study Conference at Lucknow gave the following illustration concerning this :

"When American foreign policy is determined primarily by the criterion of anti-Communism it generally strengthens conservative and reactionary political groups in the East Asian scene and tends to weaken the forces of healthy social reform. This line is bound to be self-defeating because in the final analysis social and spiritual health is the best answer to Communism."

Underlying all the problems of the underdeveloped countries is the need for extension of opportunities for education. Special attention should be given to the training of experts in public administration and technology. The churches have a direct responsibility towards education ; especially in the rural areas and with regard to women.

Conclusion

In all these fields, the real dangers are complacency, lack of imagination, and the dull sense of hopelessness that settles upon those of little faith. World economic and social interdependence involves a new dimension in the task of creating a responsible society, which men will have to face realizing that statistics are only inadequate indications of desperate human need. Upon Christians rests a special responsibility to see the challenge, to press their governments to take the issue seriously, and themselves to act sacrificially.

Because Jesus Christ is Lord in earth and heaven, the call to responsible social action which God addresses to His Church, does not present us with an impossible task. We are not called upon to shoulder the burden of this world, but to seek justice, freedom and peace to the best of our ability in the social order. The Church knows that in obedience and prayer our efforts will bear fruit. For God has called us unto liberty to serve one another by love. "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it."

VI. REPORT OF A POST-EVANSTON REGIONAL STUDY CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL QUESTIONS (1956)

Prefatory Note:

This section presents a report from the Study Conference on "The Responsible Society in National and International Affairs" convened by the Division of Studies at the request of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches. This conference, which was held at Arnoldshain, Germany, July 9-14, 1956, was requested to consider the bearing on present day problems of the ideas which had emerged at the Evanston Assembly in the reports of sections III (Social Questions) and IV (International Affairs).

About sixty-five theologians, and laymen from business, government, agriculture, labour and law were present, including a number of church leaders. For the first time since 1948 there was a substantial representation from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and East Germany. Sir Kenneth Grubb of Great Britain and Prof. E. de Vries of Holland were co-chairmen of the conference.

After meeting in plenary session the conference was divided into two groups, the first concerned with questions of International Relations and the second with Social and Economic Affairs. Only the report of group II is included here. This report which is in the form of a survey of problems considered, was presented to the Department on Church and Society for circulation and study in the churches, with the approval of the Central Committee.

ECUMENICAL STUDY CONFERENCE ON THE RESPONSIBLE SOCIETY IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ARNOLDSHAIN, GERMANY, JULY 9-14, 1956 REPORT OF GROUP II ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

PART I

A. *The Situation of Fundamental Social and Economic Change which Confronts the Church and the Individual Christian Today*

The most important factor in our discussion and the background for our thinking about specific topics was the fact of widespread social and

economic change. Change in political and social situations confronts people in every part of the world, in the West, in Asia and Africa, and in communist countries as well. Most traditional categories are inadequate for describing the situation.

Some of the dimensions of change mentioned were :

1. *spiritual and cultural* — in some areas the primary thing is the upsurge of the human spirit toward emancipation, the desire for new forms of self-realization, and self-expression ;

2. *political* — the demand for political independence in some areas and the apparent indifference to political responsibility in others challenge traditional patterns of political authority ;

3. *economic* — the world economy is interdependent in ways not always obvious to the layman. Complex economic forces are at work which have roots in past history and economic changes often produce surprising effects in distant parts of the world ;

4. *demographic* — by the year 2,000 (that is to say in 45 years) the population of the world will have increased by at least 1,000 million, most of whom will live in Russia, Asia and Africa. In industrialized countries the percentage of older people will increase sharply. As this happens, it may well radically affect the pattern of economic and social living ;

5. *technical* — in some countries the rush of technical advance leading to the use of automation and nuclear power, may bring great changes in economic life and be a source of new social developments.

These and other aspects of social change force Christians to rethink previous conceptions of Christian social responsibility.

In our discussion there was some disagreement about the significance of this change and about the interpretation to be put upon it. How far does it represent a continuity with previous social developments ? Does it confirm or challenge particular social systems whether revolutionary or conservative ? Without being able to consider carefully all such questions, we did find that our discussions as Christians were greatly influenced by this over-arching fact of social change and development.

The tempo of outward change in some countries may not be as fast as it should be and in some countries it may be too fast. Christians must struggle to distinguish between those points where rapid change should be encouraged and those where it should not. This is mainly a problem of what action will best help the right sort of change. One example relates to the rapid industrialization taking place in some parts of Asia and Africa.

Unless this process is carried out in a balanced way, preventing the dangers which may arise from the uprooting of people from old sheltered communities into the atomized life of big cities, the result may be disastrous for spiritual and social life.

In all these circumstances there was general agreement that the Church must fight for freedom and justice and help people to understand and accept the responsibilities of freedom.

B. *The Way in which Present Social Change Requires Us to Think about Christian Social Responsibility*

In a situation of fundamental change our thinking about Christian responsibility in society must consider the following points :

1. All the social systems in the countries from which we come are in flux ; all are being tested. This fact must make the Christian wary of all the old social and economic battle lines. We have to concern ourselves with the concrete situations with which we are confronted at any time, rather than with words such as "Capitalism" and "Socialism" which may be misleading or inapplicable in a changing world. This applies also to fixed attitudes in the field of international relations.

2. This does not mean that Christians can be ethical relativists. There are eternal truths, and there are social values and traditions to be preserved. But the big problem for Christians in a time of such great change may be to avoid a "Christian" social ideology, that is, expressing in a too definite and universal way what is the meaning of Christian justice and freedom. Christians have often condemned or supported social movements without understanding their true nature and significance.

3. The great temptation to which Christians should not yeld is to hold to familiar and safe structures, a "restorationist" attitude. There was not a full discussion of what constitutes a restorationist attitude but certain evidences were mentioned. There can be no going back. No rigid ideology is helpful in a revolutionary situation. As one speaker from Eastern Europe said, Christians cannot identify themselves with new ideologies of collectivist society nor with the old ideologies of former societies. Only in the Bible can we find the true foundations for action. The Christian must also avoid apocalyptic dramatization of his fears and his hopes.

Some felt that it is impossible to discuss many of these concrete problems without a full Christian understanding of Marxist ideology and its opposition to the Christian faith. The discussions did not include the full analysis from the standpoint of the Christian faith. Some think that this is an urgent task that the churches must undertake together in the future.

With participants coming from so many different situations, the conference was compelled to discuss in a fundamental way the problem of the Biblical basis of Christian understanding of freedom and justice in our times.

C. *The Bible and Social Decisions*

The Bible decisively illumines the minds and hearts of Christians as they face the problems of the social order. It does this because God through His revelation in the Bible frees man from fear and narrow loyalties which distort judgment. It does this because it reveals the true nature of the world under God as known in Christ and the true nature of man. When choices are most limited, and when a man needs above all courage and hope, and the realization of forgiveness, God's word in the Bible may lead directly to the most important political decisions, for example the decision to hold fast to the conviction that Christ is Lord above every government or other earthly power. In other situations, when more possibilities are open, when men may plan for the future and work for long term constructive solutions, the Bible provides an ultimate source of judgment upon society, the general direction in which man should move, the basis for self-criticism and repentance.

It provides concrete judgments upon specific wrongs against humanity.

It enables us to see all persons as loved of God and in the light of His purpose for them.

The Bible speaks to us through the revelation of God in Christ and not through specific texts taken out of the context of that revelation. It does not provide abstract concepts or specific laws by which we know what should be done under all situations ; nor does its illumination take the place of scientific knowledge of the conditions under which we must act, or of rational analysis of the possibilities of action upon us.

A closed system of laws based upon Biblical texts can be one of the most destructive types of ideology.

The Church and all Christians need to be open to truth from all sources. They should realize that Christian teaching has often been purified by the shock of events or by interaction with secular thought, but such purification depends finally upon a clearer understanding of the meaning of the central Biblical revelation.

As we approach the specific problems of men today the Bible enables us to see the following :

— It provides the basis for our understanding of the dignity of man as created in God's image. It reminds us that man was not made to be a slave of things or of institutions or of collectivities or of other men, but to be a free and responsible creature of God.

— It enables us to understand sin in both economic injustice and in all systems which tend to reduce men to a subhuman existence.

— God's solidarity with all men demonstrated in His becoming man in Christ is the basis for our responsibility for all our neighbours, of our responsibility to establish institutions and structures in society which are favourable to man's humanity, to just and meaningful personal relations, to responsibility in work, to the integrity of the whole life of man, in the factory, in his family, in his community, in his Church, and in all other social relationships. In the light of the Biblical revelation we can best understand the many ways in which men become the victims of the pride and the greed of other men, often of good men who are self-deceived, and that there is no pattern of institutions, no economic system which is secure against such injustice. Whatever external changes may come about in the political and economic order, there remains the need of perpetual renewal, both of men's spirit and of their institutions.

Part II — Five Specific Aspects of Our Changing Situation

A. *The Problems of a Dynamic Society*

One of the evidences of change is the dynamic economic development taking place in many countries. But certain countries or parts of countries do not participate in this change — they stagnate. On the other hand dynamic economic life does not necessarily make for responsible society. It may be the dynamism of an ant heap. In this regard we need more satisfactory social and moral criteria for economic growth : How is it measured ? What are its goals ? Can growth be too fast ? Some of the issues to be considered are as follows :

1. There is a need for balanced development. Growth is too often measured in terms of great new industrial complexes — but we must keep in mind the need for more food and for total community advance, in housing, social services, education, etc.

2. There is a danger of fascination with spectacular mechanical or industrial change to the neglect of subtler and more important organizational and structural changes.

3. Nuclear power development is on its way but we must guard against illusions. Its use involves great capital expenditure and large amounts of technical experience and skill. Also it may not benefit underdeveloped countries as soon and as much as industrialized countries.

4. The changes should be accepted by people, not passively, but with active participation, which will be possible only if society helps to develop free and responsible personalities.

The dynamic changes in economic life raise serious problems of social organization, because they greatly affect the way people will live in the future. We in the Church must seriously look into these questions — especially the urgent need for new ways of educating young people to live responsibly in the new mass productive, mass democratic systems.

Many current discussions of dynamic society are based on the fallacy that it is enough to have the dynamic spirit — then all will be well. The Church must think of the serious social and spiritual problems involved and in this connection many churches must revise their own approach and their own structure. They are based on a static conception of society and their own organization and methods of outreach reflect little awareness of the vital changes in society. Churches must learn how to fulfil their ministry to people in rapidly changing communities.

Various American speakers pointed to the benefits and the problems of abundance created by a dynamic economy. Among the problems mentioned especially were: the development of questionable practices of advertising and salesmanship and new attitudes of acquisitiveness. A new and dangerous kind of consumption ethics is tolerated as a necessary accompaniment of the mass production system. This is a heavy price to pay for living in a dynamic society.

B. *Areas of Rapid Social Change in Asia, Africa, and Latin America*

In our discussion we gave special attention to areas in Asia, Africa and Latin America, where the dignity of man as a child of God is violated. Rapid economic development without adequate concern for social and ethical values leaves people bewildered. Economic development and technological change in some areas have caused other areas to decline. It may be that there is a new consciousness that conditions of living have been subhuman in the recent past or are so at present, and that such conditions in the absence of any real improvement, create the danger of dull resignation or revolt.

We are grateful for the fact that under these circumstances churches and Christians have borne witness in obedience to God. In the widespread desire for a better and fuller life, which involves rapid economic and social development, we recognize a cry for freedom and justice which must not go unheeded. Emancipation from all forms of enslavement should have the whole hearted support of Christians everywhere.

Christians who live under more favourable economic and social conditions must express in action their common humanity with all oppressed and suffering people. They must be willing, for example, to pay higher taxes so that their governments can make their equitable contribution through loans and grants for economic developments elsewhere; and to support those economic policies of their own countries which will bring

about closer international cooperation and a balanced development of other countries.

These actions must be taken with a sense of solidarity in a world which, for the first time in history, because of the nature of modern techniques, has become one world. Christians should urge their governments to take such actions not sparingly, but with a readiness to cooperate with other governments through multilateral agreements and through the United Nations and other international institutions which might lead to real common world-wide undertaking. They should urge that such assistance be given without strings.

Wherever peoples are determined to work for their own development these efforts should be supported, without imposing upon them the methods and procedures of the West, in order to increase their effectiveness and to improve the balance between the various actions taken in the field of agriculture, industry, public utilities and social services.

Voluntary agencies, including churches, can make an important contribution by an "investment in people", assisting in the training of indigenous experts and leaders in development, especially in those countries where there may be narrow limits to the amounts of capital investment which can be absorbed. The need for devoted and trained leaders is especially pressing for over a 1,000 million people in the vast rural areas of Asia, Africa and Latin America.

C. *Christian Responsibility in Relation to the State and Voluntary Groups*

Under this heading we discussed political freedom, the role of the government in economic life, and the need for more community and mutual responsibility in society as a whole and in its working units.

1. Because of the development of new patterns of economic life the state has had to assume new responsibilities in this field. Christian thinking about the role of the state must be reviewed at many points. Christians should be suspicious of abstract statements and generalizations, because the actual effectiveness and field of action of the state varies so greatly from country to country. In thinking about criteria for state intervention the Christian must keep in mind the following:

a) The degree of government action depends on the particular circumstances of the time and the development of the nation in question.

b) The political and administrative competence of the government.

c) The effectiveness of bureaucracy in communication and its maintenance of flexibility and initiative.

It is now more generally recognized that only government is able to provide security in a number of fields. Yet we must remain aware of the

danger of too much security. Also experience has shown that new forms of government action can be developed which will combine government responsibility with a spirit of enterprise. The problem is to know where are the limits of state intervention in concrete situations. A fundamental way of guarding against totalitarian dangers is to encourage the functioning of groups such as the university, the private corporation, the trade union and many other voluntary organizations between the individual and the state.

2. The group vigorously discussed the question of the Christian witness in the situation of a communist state. Here there were two main points of view expressed :

a) The communist state by definition representing the ideologizing of the political function and the complete subjection of the human spirit has to be resisted. The Christian must say a clear "No" to the communist state before he can begin to recognize the positive aspects within the communist achievement.

It was, however, recognized that even the most severe totalitarian systems are rarely so efficient or effective that they entirely exclude "human breathing space", and there are areas of personal responsibility which are sometimes very considerable.

b) The communist state must be seen in the light of historical development. In some countries and with regard to various areas of life, one can say that such a state has brought improvements to the preceding situation. This point of view emphasized that there may be considerable areas of personal responsibility in communist systems and the Christian must work to enlarge the area of freedom through "gradual and slow" reform, especially in situations such as those in Eastern Europe today.

3. The group also discussed the problem of responsible action in the diverse groups which make up modern society. There was general agreement in welcoming the development of many diverse centres of power and responsibility which form the basis of the pluralistic structure of many societies today. However, such groups always incur the danger of becoming irresponsible sectional pressure groups. Examples were given of how this danger may be mitigated or avoided, but there is no obvious and universally applicable way of ensuring that this will happen.

D. *The Worker and Modern Industrial Problems in Relation to the Church*

The discussion of the group were concerned in detail with the question : what is the role of the workers in a responsible society and how can it be strengthened ? In connection with this question the group considered what other tasks and problems have priority in modern industrial society.

1. *The situation today*

The group agreed that in spite of rising standards of living among the workers, they often do not have full confidence in the social order. Whether the standard of living rises or not, it is decisive that the workers should be convinced that the present order of society does not merely serve the privileges of a minority. It was agreed further that the tendency in the churches to break away from their middle class prejudices and to show solidarity with the workers in the industrial world had not yet gone far enough.

There was no time for the group to discuss thoroughly the strong tendency for men to become simply the tools of production, a tendency which is found not only among workers but also among other classes of employees including those with academic training.

2. *The task of the Church in this situation* (especially the task of the layman)

The discussion went along the following lines :

a) It is not a satisfactory Christian view to want to improve human relations in industry simply in order to improve production. The question of what it means to be human is one of the most pressing questions involved in all the concrete decisions that have to be taken in the industrial order. This question must be answered by the Church not only by what it says but by what it does through the effort of Christian laymen in industry to make the economic order as just as possible.

b) The situation in the industrial world is such that it would be naive to under-estimate the differences between various groups. The Church, while opposing violence by employers and employees, should avoid preaching any form of cheap social pacifism. Open injustice can often be dealt with only in sharp conflict, for example, in strikes. The Church should, by its example, do two things : first in its own life and organization it should encourage consultation and fellowship between different groups and classes of society. On the other hand, its members need to encourage responsible cooperation between different groups in industry. Modern society requires the development of institutions in which organized employers, workers, and consumers work together, to serve the common needs of all.

c) Important as work is both to the individual and society, the tendency to idolize work as such present in the East and in the West must be resisted by the Church. Technology is increasingly making possible time for leisure which man must put to creative use. Leisure time must be free of the mechanization and impersonality of modern work, and its rhythm must be different from that of work. Because of the importance of this, the building of dwellings for families must make room for this kind of leisure need, which makes the methods used in town planning particularly important.

E. *The Farmer and Problems of Rural Population in a Changing Society*

Nearly everywhere economic development demands and is accompanied by reduction of the number of people engaged in agriculture. These changes place serious tensions upon the agricultural economy and create problems for rural people which must be of concern to the Church.

Historically, peasants and farmers have frequently been the victims of poverty, ignorance and exploitation. This is still the case among many millions of the world's population. Even in economically developed countries where agriculture has been modernized and farm population drastically reduced, farmers are frequently under severe economic pressure.

The following elements of Christian responsibility were mentioned in the discussion in respect to the agricultural sector of the economy:

1. Society, which depends upon farmers for most of its supply of basic food and fibre, has a responsibility to develop those social and economic institutions which will make it possible for farmers to produce efficiently and adequately for the meeting of human need. This includes land tenure arrangements, technical developments, credit institutions, and cooperative associations.

2. Farmers have a responsibility to apply their labour, their skills and their land diligently and conscientiously to the production of foods and fibres, which are needed to meet the legitimate physical needs of mankind.

3. Unregulated market prices tend to be unfavourable to farmers whenever they are effective in producing abundance. Therefore, Christian responsibility may, on occasion, require action by governments to protect the levels of living of farm people and to aid in necessary agricultural readjustments.

4. It is not satisfactory to encourage full and abundant agricultural production only to see the product piled up as undistributed and embarrassing surpluses in the presence of hungry and naked people. A major aim of a dynamic economy, both nationally and internationally, and a Christian responsibility, must be to open the channels of trade and raise general levels of consumer purchasing power in ways that will make potential abundance more readily available to all God's children.

5. It is important to recognize the international effects of large stock piles of agricultural goods. They tend to act as severe depressants on the prices of farm products. Christians should favour and work for international commodity agreements as a means of promoting economic stability and international order.

* * *

In plenary session, the following points were made about the statement of Group II

A speaker referred to the sentence in the report in which it is stated that "The communist state by definition... has to be resisted", and inquired whether the meaning was clear. Christians ought to resist, by their witness and their action, the attempt to make of the political function of the state an ideology. Each state, including the communist state, is tempted in greater or lesser degree to pervert the task of ordering the state. For example, it is the task of the state to proclaim justice (see Romans 13) to punish the evil and to protect the good. That is the divine command to the state and divine task for the statesman. The danger is however always present, as is shown quite clearly in the story of the Passion, that holders of an ideology misuse the administration of justice as a result of their fanaticism. Pilate first of all stood for the true task of the state over against the Jewish ideologists, and finally capitulated before them. Christian resistance in word and suffering has its place here. The speaker argued therefore that the Christian should not say "no" to the communist state but within the communist state he should resist, in a true Christian way, at every point where political activities were falsified by communist ideology, and whereby justice was turned into injustice, and freedom into tyranny. The present formulation is not helpful for our fellow-Christians from Eastern Europe — first of all because it is not Biblical. If we are concerned lest the churches in Eastern Europe are unable to be sufficiently vigilant towards the communist threat to the Church and its faith we do not help them by recommending as an alternative that they answer their state with such an absolute "No". We must not mistake the ideology of communism with the reality of the communistic state. The Marxist ideologists desire that all political activities be based on and be used for the growth of Marxism. But there are many points where it will be found that the communist leaders serve the will of God in performing state functions even acting contrary to their ideologies without intending to do so. It would not be good to say "No" to the communist regime either. The word is far too unclear. We should limit ourselves to a firm and clear "No" to the ideologizing of state functions, and to the exercise of this "No" even when it may be risky, and remind the state of its actual functions. We have the good news that God will not take away His hands from this earth and that although the "mystery of iniquity" (2 Thess. 2) is already felt, God will prevent the state from being changed into a state of evil. If the anti-Christ who is already working secretly becomes apparent then Christ will come to destroy him with His word.

A second speaker held to the opposite view. It is not possible to resist only in a single concrete case. For example in the liquidation of the big estates, the courts must judge according to laws which are unjust in their present form and these unjust laws are unjust because they are based on a pattern of class ideology. That is why it is necessary to resist not only the ideology but also the laws and measures which are based on it. The document could not explain

in detail how this resistance would have to be carried out. That is why the word "No" was put in inverted commas. This resistance is not of a revolutionary kind, but rather a spiritual resistance born out of suffering. Adolf Hitler's government was an authority in the sense of Romans 13, just as much as the government in the East Zone of Germany, but we owe these governments our Christian witness (martyria). That is why we must resist.

Other speakers rose to affirm both of these views. The chairman noted that this discussion was not ended and would continue ; and the statement as it stood in the report was not the last word on the question, rather it reflected the discussion during the meetings.

Mr. Charles Taft of the U.S.A. said that the report was a very good document and he noted that the section on agricultural problems marked the first time this subject had been given proper attention in an ecumenical document on social questions. He was however not entirely pleased with the section on "The Worker and Modern Industrial Problems in Relation to the Church". This section as it stands refers to the situation in a particular area and reflects the problems of that area. It does not represent the situation in the U.S.A.

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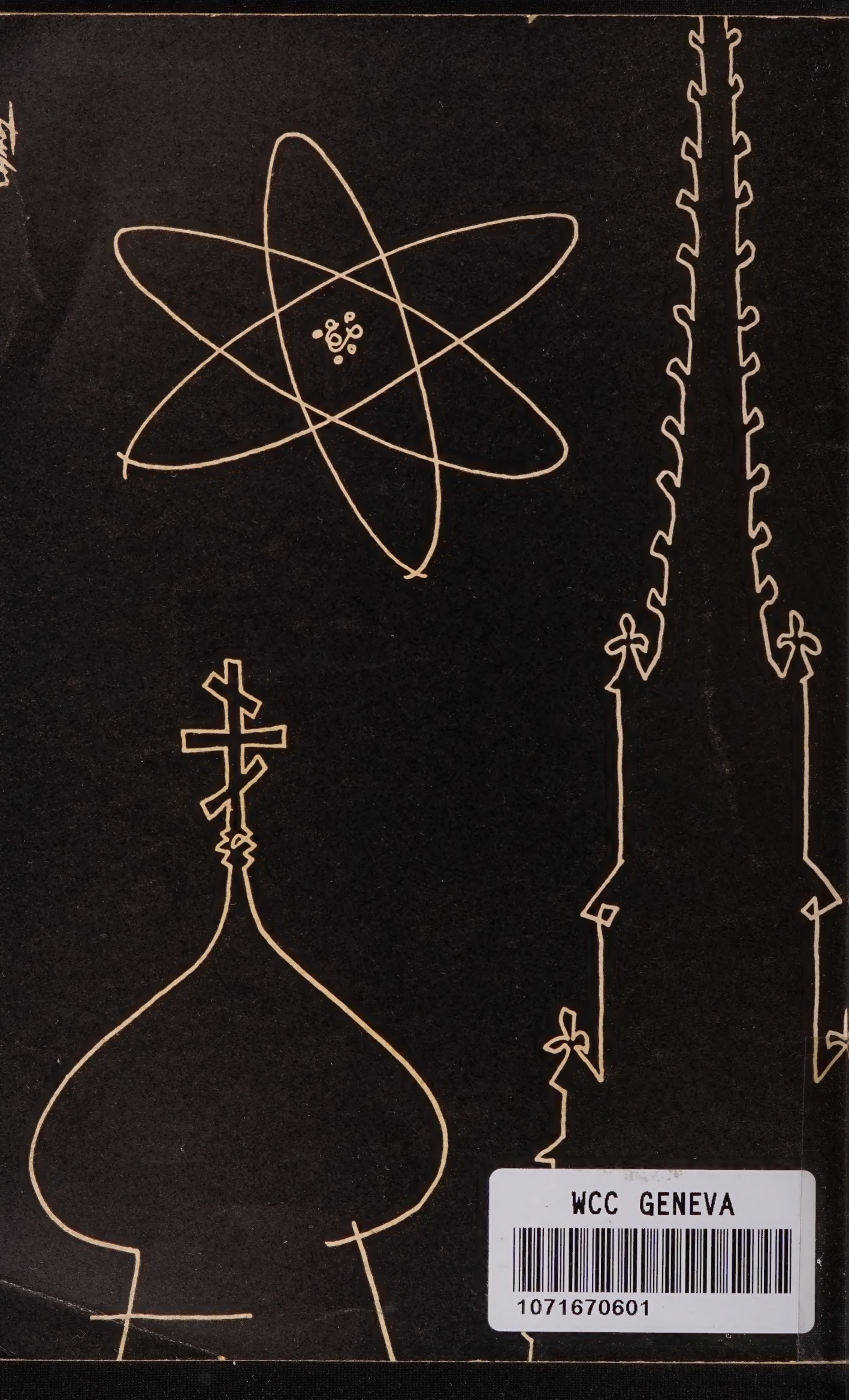

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